

Secrets of Godly Living

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Foreword

This book has been written in answer to the requests of many who have been especially blessed spiritually by its messages in the form of sermons in different parts of the United States. The purpose of the author is to make the way of salvation so simple, practical, and wonderful that the gospel will be what the name implies, "good news," or "glad tidings of great joy," to all who read.

Genuine Christianity is known by its fruits, one of which is happiness. Failure in this respect constitutes an indictment against the religion we profess. If the gospel does not produce faith, hope, courage, and cheerfulness, and provide a complete remedy for the disease of sin, it is evidence of either a misinterpretation of its meaning and purpose or a misapplication of its basic principles to the daily life. An attempt is here made to present a few of the most important of the secrets of godly living with the hope and prayer that they will help produce in the lives of the readers the spiritual revival and reformation so much needed at this time.

Righteousness by faith is the very core of the gospel. It is the positive phase of the message of salvation, "the third angel's message in verity," which "is to be proclaimed

with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in large measure." We are told that "the message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord," and that "this is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel." Since the latter rain is now due, and is the only means by which the Lord can "finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness," it is of paramount importance that "the sweetest melodies that come from human lips,—justification by faith, and the righteousness of Christ"—shall be given priority in the proclamation of the everlasting gospel in its application to our time. As a contribution to the accomplishment of this purpose, this little book is sent forth to the remnant people of God.

THE AUTHOR.

The Mystery of Godliness

1 The true and counterfeit systems of religion, which embrace the whole human race, are set forth in the Scriptures as the two mysteries. One is called "the mystery of God," or "the mystery of godliness," and the other "the mystery of iniquity"; and they have their origin, center, and inspiration in two personalities—Michael and Lucifer, or Christ and Satan. The word *mystery* as here used has the meaning of "secret," for Christ through the gospel is the secret of a life of godliness and righteousness, obedience and loyalty; and Satan through his false system of religion is the secret of a life of sin and iniquity, disobedience and rebellion.

In a primary sense Satan is "the man of sin," "that Wicked," "the son of perdition," and "the mystery of iniquity," described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10. "The man of lawlessness" and "Incarnation of Wickedness" are terms used in other translations. We are told that "Satan himself abode not in the truth; he is the mystery of iniquity."

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 365. He is the secret of a life of iniquity in those who yield to his temptations. In a secondary sense these terms apply to the false system of religion by which he deceives mankind, or to any of his human agents who do his will in making war on Christ and His church.

Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30), and anyone who is against Christ is an "antichrist," for that is the meaning of the term. Therefore we are told that there are "many antichrists," and that the person who denies the incarnation and divinity of Christ is "a deceiver and an antichrist." (1 John 2:18; 4:1-4; 2 John 7.) This makes Satan the chief, or supreme, antichrist, and leader of all anti-Christian forces. "Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God's holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him."—Ibid., p. 62. "The determination of antichrist to carry out the rebellion he began in heaven will continue to work in the children of disobedience."—Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 230.

The two antagonistic systems of religion are symbolized in the twelfth and seventeenth chapters of Revelation as two symbolic women, and both are world-embracing movements. The bride, or wife, of Christ includes the saints of all ages. "All of God's people upon the earth are one body, from the beginning to the end of time. They have one Head that directs and governs the body."

—Ibid., vol. 1, p. 283. The church, or bride, of Satan embraces the wicked of all ages and is called, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Spiritual Babylon includes a mother system and a large family of daughters representing lesser counterfeit religions, including all "the abominations of the earth," reaching back to the entrance of sin. The family name is derived from the fact that Satan's counterfeit to the gospel had its origin after the Flood in ancient Babylon and the Chaldean Mysteries. In this sense *mystery* is defined as "something willfully hidden from the knowledge of others and fitted to inspire a sense of awe: especially something incomprehensible: anything artfully made difficult." This is characteristic of all false religions. The human agent used by Satan in establishing his counterfeit system soon after the Deluge was Nimrod, "the mighty rebel before the Lord."

In the light of these facts the following counsel is very timely: "All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth's history. . . . In the very time in which we live, the Lord has called His people and has given them a message to bear. He has called them to expose the wickedness of the man of sin. . . . The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed, be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message. . . . But what-

ever phase of the message is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope, 'the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star.'"—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 118.

But why is the book of Revelation singled out in the study of this subject? Because, as no other book of Scripture, it exposes "the mystery of iniquity" in its last-day manifestations. And it also gives us the crowning revelation of Jesus Christ as the only hope of mankind. In fact the very title that John gives to the book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," sets forth its chief purpose and identifies the Author. Here the two mysteries are described in contrast, with the assurance that the genuine will eventually triumph.

The gospel message is both positive and negative. It includes the exposing of error as well as the revealing of truth. It embraces both warnings against sin and exhortations to righteousness. But the positive should always be given the greater emphasis, for the best way to unmask the false is to disclose the true. Federal money experts become so well acquainted with the genuine that they can quickly discern the counterfeit. It is for this reason that righteousness by faith is declared to be "the third angel's message in verity." A religious system based on attempted righteousness and salvation by human works and merit is most effectually exposed by a positive message of justification, righteousness, and salvation by faith in Christ on the basis of grace or unmerited favor.

In a primary sense Christ is the man of obedience and godliness. He is righteousness incarnate, and is therefore "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." He is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctifica-

tion, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30. He is the mystery, or secret, of godly character and conduct. In Colossians 2:2, 3, Christ is called "the mystery of God" in whom "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "That they may know the mystery of God, even Christ," is the rendering in the American Revised Version. In 1 Timothy 3:16 we are told that "the mystery of godliness" is God "manifest in the flesh" through the incarnation of Christ. The indwelling of Christ is therefore the secret of a godly life. But His manifestation in the flesh at His first advent is not sufficient. His return through His representative, the Holy Spirit, to make His abode in human hearts is the secret and only means by which they may be transformed into the divine image. In fact, the person who cannot confess from experience that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" is declared to be not of God but "a deceiver and an antichrist."

Before His ascension Jesus comforted His disciples with the promise that He would send them "another Comforter" to abide with them forever, and that this "Spirit of truth" would dwell with them and be in them. Because of His return to abide in their hearts through the Holy Spirit, Jesus could say, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." (John 14:16-18.) This promise began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when "the souls of the believers thrilled with the conscious presence of their ascended Lord."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 351.

It was for this reason that the apostle could say that "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations" is now "made manifest to his saints," and that "God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . ; which is Christ in you the

hope of glory." He further declared that this experience makes it possible for every Christian to become "perfect in Christ Jesus," who works in us "mightily." (Col. 1: 26-29.)

"Christ in you" and "you in Christ," or their equivalent, are favorite expressions of the apostle Paul, especially in the books of Ephesians and Colossians. Someone has said that genuine Christian efficiency could be called "Ephesiancy," because that would be the result of obedience to the instruction given in the book of Ephesians. This twofold union of humanity and divinity is a mystery that cannot be fully explained, but it can be known by experience. This is beautifully set forth in the following statement: "The soul must be cleansed from vanity and pride, and vacated of all that has held it in possession, and Christ must be enthroned within. Human science is too limited to comprehend the atonement. The plan of redemption is so far-reaching that philosophy cannot explain it. It will ever remain a mystery that the most profound reasoning cannot fathom. The science of salvation cannot be explained; but it can be known by experience."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 494, 495. This is the most important of all the secrets of godly living; in fact it embraces all others.

The paramount importance of this union of the human and the divine through the God-man, or Emmanuel, is emphasized in the question recorded in 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" So vital is this challenge that the question as to whether we are "in the faith" is involved in the answer. A *reprobate* is one who is "rejected, disapproved, depraved, abandoned

in sin, a castaway; lost to virtue and grace." It is therefore a life-and-death question as to which of the two mysteries dominates our lives. The battle is over the dominion of the heart, and Spirit control and demon possession are real experiences that determine our eternal destinies.

Paul declared to the believers at Rome that Christ dwells in you through "his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:10-17.) "Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal." "The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life to the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ."—*Ibid.*, pp. 388, 805. "Transformation of character is the testimony to the world of an indwelling Christ. The Spirit of God produces a new life in the soul, bringing the thoughts and desires into obedience to the will of Christ; and the inward man is renewed in the image of God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 233.

This union with Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit is the secret of complete victory over "the mystery of iniquity," for we are assured that "no one who continues in union with Him lives in sin," and that "the spirit of the anti-Christ" is powerless, because "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." It is further stated that those who are "born of God" and are "in union with his Son Jesus Christ" are so secure that they are beyond the reach of Satan. "We know that no one who is a child of God lives in sin, but He who is God's Child keeps him, and the Evil one cannot touch him."

The apostle of certainty then adds that "we know that we are children of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the Evil one." 1 John 3:6; 4:2-5; 5:18-20, Weymouth.

This glorious truth is beautifully stated in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 323, 324: "When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ, becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies, is impregnable to the assaults of Satan." On the other hand, we are assured that when we dwell in Christ He becomes to us a fortress that is impregnable to the enemy's attacks." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Prov. 18:10.

In Revelation 3:20 is a wonderful promise to God's remnant people. Christ is pictured standing at the door of the heart, and also His church temple, knocking and pleading to be admitted. His voice is heard saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The appeal is for complete reconciliation, of which the partaking of food together has always been a sign. A door serves a double purpose. It is a means of entrance or a barrier against it. A door either lets a person in or keeps him out, according to the will of the householder. As with Solomon's Temple, the church and heart temples have many rooms, or chambers,

and Christ will never be satisfied until He reaches the inner chamber of the sanctuary and is in complete possession of it.

Christ never forces His company upon anyone, nor does He go where He is not wanted. He waits for an invitation to enter. Someone has said that the door's hinges "are man's will." "Christ never forces His company upon any one. He interests Himself in those who need Him. Gladly will He enter the humblest home, and cheer the lowliest heart. But if men are too indifferent to think of the heavenly guest, or ask Him to abide with them, he passes on."—*Ibid.*, p. 800.

We are told that "if we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding-place," for "Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard." (*Ibid.*, p. 324; *The Great Controversy*, p. 589.) But the assurance is given that "marvelous will be the transformation wrought in him who by faith opens the door of the heart to the Saviour."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 93. Then "the life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

For the privilege of setting up His kingdom of grace in the heart, Christ offers the greatest reward described in Holy Writ: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3:21. The crowning promise of Scripture is to those who have an experimental knowledge of union with Christ. Having learned the secret of godly living, they triumph over sin

and its author, and are entitled to the privilege of sovereignty with their Emancipator in the kingdom of this world when it is restored to its Edenic beauty. In the eternal Paradise home the fruition of the hopes and anticipations of the Christian pilgrims of earth will be translated into a glorious reality.

“Called to Be Saints”

2

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Christians in Rome addressed them as “the called of Jesus Christ” and the “beloved of God,” who are “called to be saints.” He desires for them grace and peace, and thanks God because their faith is “spoken of throughout the whole world.” What an enviable reputation this first-century church had, and when the present-day church reaches a similar spiritual state the earth will be quickly lightened with the glory of God and His work cut short in righteousness. (Rom. 1:6-8.)

The only purpose of the gospel is to turn sinners into saints, so that they become “God’s loved ones” (Weymouth), a term of affection that applies to men and women with godly characters and conduct. A *saint* is “a holy or godly person; one of great moral or religious purity; one who has been sanctified.” The word *saint* comes from a word meaning “sacred,” and represents a person who is sanctified, or set apart for a holy use or sacred purpose. In the Roman Catholic Church the term *saint* is applied

to only a favored few who are canonized, usually long after death, and never during lifetime. But in the divine plan all who hear the gospel message are called to be saints here and now, and God alone, who is able to read the mind and know the inner life, is capable of determining sainthood. There are therefore millions of unknown and unrecognized and uncanonized saints who are beloved and honored in heaven.

The apostle to the Gentiles was anxious that believers in the wicked city of Rome, the capital of the empire, the stronghold of paganism, the metropolis of the world, should exert a mighty influence for Christianity. In the estimation of heaven men and women are distinguished wholly by their relationship to Christ and the gospel. On this basis they are great or small, saint or sinner. Jesus declared that those who violate even one of the least of His commandments, and worse still, teach others to do so, are reckoned in heaven as little people engaged in little business, and those who carefully observe all the precepts of the moral law are considered great. (Matt. 5:19.)

Genuine Christians are never recognized as such by outward badges or uniforms, but rather by their saintly characters, the real mark of Christianity. The apostle sets forth some of the most outstanding characteristics of sainthood. In the first place, they are "the called of Jesus Christ." They have been called by One they have never seen, but have heard His gracious invitation through His Word, and have experienced the inner call of His Spirit. They have not received the grace of God in vain, but have accepted the invitation to minor apostleship through "the obedience of faith."

In the second place, saints are the "beloved of God,"

who are the special recipients of His peace and favor, the supreme objects of His regard. Because He first loved them, they respond with love in return, for love begets love. John, the apostle of love, discovered that human speech is inadequate to describe the love of God, and so cried out, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3:1. Only through a vision of divine love as demonstrated on the cross of Calvary can its height and depth and breadth be measured.

In the third place, saints are those who are "separated unto the gospel of God," and are in possession of "the spirit of holiness," which characterized their divine Lord. By righteousness they are distinguished from the old life in the flesh and from this evil world. Saints are "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," among whom they "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." Phil. 2:15, 16. The chief business of a Christian is to cultivate holiness, to be "separate from sinners," and to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Eph. 4:1. When William Carey was asked the question, "What is your business?" he replied, "My business is to serve God." The further question, "But what do you do for a living?" brought forth the answer, "I cobble shoes for a living, but my business is to serve God." To the genuine Christian the business of being godly, or saintly, is paramount to everything else in life. If this were true of all professed Christians, the gospel commission would soon be carried out and the kingdom of glory ushered in.

The apostle Paul used similar language in addressing

his epistle to the church of Corinth. He described them as being "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," and who "in every thing" are "enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge," so that they "come behind in no gift" as they are "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," and are thus "blameless" when He appears. He declared that sainthood involves "fellowship" with the Saint of all saints. (1 Cor. 1:2-9.) Saints are therefore those who live in close communion and association with Christ and His followers.

In the light of these qualifications for sainthood, do we dare claim to be saints? Are we developing saintly dispositions and attaining saintly characters? Saints after the order of the great Example turn the other cheek in reconciliation, give the other coat in liberality, and go the second mile in service. In their business dealings they give "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," so that the purchaser cannot possibly have any ground for complaint. They practice the golden rule so fully that they meet the demands of the second table of the Decalogue and love their neighbors as much as they love themselves, even in a generation when self-love seems to be the ruling passion of mankind.

Genuine saintliness gladly puts into practice the splendid counsel contained in the twelfth chapter of Romans, a part of which reads: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Verses 17, 18. He will thus follow in the footsteps of the incomparable Saint, who, when every principle of justice was trampled ruthlessly underfoot in His trials

before the Hebrew and Roman tribunals, displayed not the slightest indication of retaliation or revenge and "opened not his mouth" in accusation or self-defense. We are told that "when He was reviled, He did not answer with reviling; when He suffered He uttered no threats, but left His wrongs in the hands of the righteous Judge." 1 Peter 2:23, Weymouth. Are we saints of this beautiful caliber?

Not only does Bible prophecy describe God's last warning message to the world in such detail that all who hear it cannot help recognizing it as present truth for this generation, but it also pictures the characteristics of the messengers who proclaim it to the world and prepare a people for translation. Although it is of vital importance that God's remnant people should be able to find themselves and their message in these forecasts, and to know who they are and what their mission is in the world, it is of even greater importance that they measure up to the character requirements of those who are described as the genuine saints of the latter days, for what we are is more basic and fundamental than what we do and say.

This fact is beautifully stated in the following quotations: "If the heart is right, your words, your dress, your acts, will all be right."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 158. "You must *be* good before you can *do* good. You can not exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rose-bush to yield its fragrant bloom, or the vine its purple clusters."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 183.

Righteousness is first of all right being, which results in right doing, or right living. In other words, we are not what we are because we do what we do, but we do what we do because we are what we are. The source of godly living is within rather than without. Out of the heart are "the issues of life," the results of character. The basic secret of godly conduct is therefore a godly character, and character is the only treasure we can take from this world to the next when Christ returns to dispense His rewards.

Though there are many prophetic descriptions of the everlasting gospel in its last-day phase, the most complete and detailed is found in the fourteenth chapter of the Revelation. But this prediction also includes those who accept and proclaim the message that prepares a people for translation into the kingdom of glory. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." First of all they are said to be saints, which means that they "are sanctified in Christ Jesus" and have fellowship with Him.

In Isaiah 62:10-12 is one of the many prophetic descriptions of the last gospel message and the kind of people it produces. We are told that these saints of the last days will be called "The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord," and a people "Sought out, A city not forsaken." They do not call themselves saints, or the holy people. A real saint is the last person in the world to boast of his holiness or declare that he is without sin. God calls them "the saints of the most High."

In Ephesians 5:25-27 we are told that Christ will sanctify and cleanse His church, so that when He returns He will "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be

holy and without blemish"; and in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 it is stated that those whom the God of peace sanctifies wholly will "be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The revelator sees a company of the redeemed out of the last generation standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion "having His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads," and they are declared to be "as pure as virgins" and will have the privilege of following "the Lamb wherever He goes" because they are victors over lying and are "faultless." (Rev. 14:1-5, Weymouth.) "Name" as used here means "character."

It is far more important to be a saint than to be orthodox in doctrines without godliness. It is more important than being a Sabbathkeeper, even though Sabbath observance is God's sign of sanctification or sainthood. It is even better to be a saintly Sundaykeeper than an unsaintly Sabbathkeeper, regardless of the fact that the Sabbath is God's outward sign of a godly character, and eventually all genuine saints will observe the true Sabbath. It is more pleasing to God to have the wrong sign with the right character than to have the right sign with the wrong character, for even the right day becomes a false sign to an unsaintly Sabbathkeeper. Character is the only passport to the kingdom of glory. Many observers of the true Sabbath will not be saved without a complete transformation of character. Only saints will be saved.

A minister was handed the Bible of a very godly woman whose funeral service he had been asked to conduct. All who knew her marveled at her saintliness of character. On the flyleaf of her Bible was found one of the secrets of her godly influence over the hundreds of students in the college where she served as dean of

women for so many years: "The secret of being a saint, is being a saint in secret." Her heart, her inner life, was right, and therefore her words and dress and conduct were all in harmony with her profession. She had learned the secrets of godly living.

One of the fruits of saintliness is patience, and therefore those who will be prepared for the return of Christ have "the patience of the saints." This has been one of the chief characteristics of the saints of all ages in this rebel world of impatience and irritability. Never was it more greatly needed than in this generation when the nerves of men and women everywhere are worn and threadbare. Are we who profess so much, patient or irritable? calm or worried? serene or easily ruffled? Is our religion a mere form or a power? legalism or a living experience in righteousness?

How is patience developed? "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:2-4. There is no other way, for "fiery trials make golden Christians." God's remnant people will come "out of great tribulation" and through this purifying agency they will have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:14. The most furious display of anger ever exhibited by the dragon will be against the remnant of the church who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17. Out of the most impatient generation of human history will come the most calm, serene, and godly characters the world has ever known.

Patience was one of the most outstanding characteristics of Jesus. He possessed the majesty of calmness under the most trying circumstances. Betrayed by one of His own disciples, denied by another, mocked, spit upon, and scourged by the mob, He kept sweet and remained patient through it all. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Heb. 5:8. His was the sweetest and most benign character the world has ever known, and the promise is that His saints will "be like him" when He returns.

Inseparably connected with patience is obedience, and therefore God's true latter-day saints will also "keep the commandments of God." Obedience in this rebel world has always characterized the true people of God, and in the earth where Satan is the god, prince, and ruler, loyalty to principle requires patience and brings persecution. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," is a statement of fact. 2 Tim. 3:12.

Obedience is righteousness, and without it there is none. (Deut. 6:25; Isa. 51:7.) "Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God; and 'God is love.' It is conformity to the law of God; for 'all Thy commandments are righteousness;' and 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him. Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it."—*Ibid.*, p. 34.

Obedience from the heart by the indwelling of Christ through His Spirit is the new covenant that writes the principles of the law in the mind and on the fleshy tables

of the heart, so that it becomes a delight to obey. This is the only obedience acceptable to God, since it makes it possible to "do by nature the things contained in the law," rather than to obey on the basis of human credit or mere sense of duty. Only those who through the new birth become new creatures and thus "partakers of the divine nature" can live in harmony with the divine precepts. To such the commandments become so "exceeding broad" that they embrace "the whole duty of man." The Decalogue is a summary of the Scriptures, for on its two tables "hang all the law and the prophets." Before boasting of being commandment keepers we should know all that is involved. It is a humbling thought.

Closely related to patience and obedience is faith, and so those who are ready for the Second Advent of Christ are said to also possess "the faith of Jesus," the same kind of living, moving, and saving faith He had. We are saved by His faith rather than our own, for in Galatians 2:16 we are told that justification is possible "by the faith of Jesus Christ." True obedience, or righteousness, both imputed and imparted, is possible only on the basis of faith. It is the only hope of justification and sanctification, which are essential to salvation.

Faith is described as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1. It is "a well-grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." (Weymouth.) Faith is evidence with no evidence in sight except God's Word. It is therefore taking God at His word as the only evidence necessary to satisfy a Christian. Therefore "without faith it is impossible to please him." "For by grace are ye saved through faith;

and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:8-10.

Let each of us ask ourselves the questions: Am I becoming more and more saintly as the days and months and years go by? Am I experiencing a continuing growth in patience? With the passing of time am I becoming more obedient to the divine precepts? Am I developing the same kind of faith Jesus had, the kind that made Him invincible and triumphant? An affirmative answer to these heart-searching questions gives evidence of a growing saintliness of character, which assures us of a passport to heaven.

Talking With God

3 "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend." This is one of the many beautiful definitions of prayer. Prayer is conversation between God and man, and for this reason is spoken of in the Scriptures as "communion." It must therefore include the reading and study of the Bible. God talks to man through His Word, and man talks to God through prayer. Courtesy demands that the time be properly divided between those who converse.

Study without prayer tends to formalism and legalism in religion. It produces a form without the power that makes religion a vital, living force. Its fruitage is the spirit of Pharisaism with its rigid rules and hair-splitting theological distinctions. It produces a hard, frigid orthodoxy, destitute of contrition, tenderness, and love. It makes men intolerant bigots and petty spies, condemning and even persecuting those who differ from them in belief and practice. They thank God that they are not like other men, and thus lose from their religious experience the

milk of human kindness, which gives grace and flavor to Christianity. It is prayer that makes religion vibrant and effectual. Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees in the statement: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." John 5:39, 40, R.V. Eternal life is not received from Scripture, but rather from the One revealed therein.

On the other hand, prayer without a knowledge of the Scriptures produces a religion without proper balance, zeal without wisdom, and enthusiasm without control. Like lightning, it is power unharnessed, and therefore useless and sometimes even dangerous. Here is the chief cause of many of the innovations that bring a reproach upon religion, producing the extremes and fanaticisms that are forms of spiritual insanity. A religion not controlled by reason and wisdom or characterized by a meek and quiet spirit is not the religion of Christ and the apostles. Prayer and study must therefore be kept properly proportioned if we would develop symmetrical characters, so that the church will fulfill her divinely appointed mission.

It has been said that "prayer . . . is the soul of religion." A religion without a soul would be as useless as a body without a character. It would be like taking Christ out of Christianity. Without Him there could be no Christianity worthy of the name. Such a religion would be heartless and loveless, with nothing left except dry formality and heavy drudgery. It would be as dead as a body without the breath of life, or as a valley of dry bones. In the vision of Ezekiel it required the miracle-working power of God to breathe the spirit of life into the dead forms

before the valley of death pulsated with life and activity as the resurrected host "stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Because of the large number of present-day professed Christians who are "dead in trespasses and sins," the great need of the church is resurrection power, in order that her religion may become vital and effectual in accomplishing her soul-saving mission. A prayerless person is as spiritually lifeless as a corpse, and a church that has lost her intercessory initiative is of no more value than a skeleton. It is prayer that gives vitality and fervor to our religious experience, so that the church becomes a bulwark against evil. It is the power of prayer that sends forth the church militant "conquering, and to conquer," so that to her enemies she becomes as "terrible as an army with banners."

After describing the Christian armor as being "able to quench all the flaming darts of the Wicked one" (Weymouth), and the weapon for aggressive warfare as the mighty two-edged sword of the Spirit, "which is the word of God," the apostle Paul makes it clear that the effectiveness of both in the contest with the hosts of darkness is due to effectual prayer. He summed up his description of the enemy we face and the means of victory with the plea: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph. 6:18. It must be *all* prayer, at *all* seasons, with *all* perseverance, and *all* supplications. It must be an all-out praying program if we would experience an all-out victory so that the Christian warrior may experience the fulfillment of the promise: "Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that

you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and, having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field." (Weymouth.)

It is also said that "prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul." There are many important spiritual exercises in the Christian religion that are absolutely necessary to life and growth. Some of these are Bible reading and study, which bring nourishment to the soul; our regular appointments with God for worship in His sanctuary; the observance of His holy Sabbath as the sign of holiness; the support of the worldwide gospel work by faithfulness in tithe paying and liberality in offerings; and the fulfillment of the great commission by diligence in missionary activity. But the holiest and most important of all is intercession. Nothing else brings us so near to God, leads us deeper into His love, or accomplishes so much in transforming us into His likeness as does prayer.

To each of us comes the divine invitation and promise: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jer. 33:3. How disappointed the Lord must be when His children pray so little. The "exceeding great and precious promises" of His Word are ours for the asking, and yet we fail to ask. The present feebleness of the church as the result of the absence of the Holy Spirit is because of the lack of prayer. Prayer would bring a return of the convicting and converting and transforming power of apostolic days. Unceasing intercession for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would soon bring a great spiritual revival and the repetition of Pentecost.

The epistles of Paul indicate that in his experience prayer was the most holy exercise of the soul. He spoke

of bowing his knees to God, that his converts might be "strengthened with might by his Spirit." He said he spent much time "night and day praying exceedingly" in order that the faith of the believers might be perfected and their hearts established "unblameable in holiness." "Without ceasing" he made mention of them in his prayers, "making request with joy." He urged that they pray for him and for one another, that the gospel might be effectual in righteousness.

We are also told that "prayer can do the impossible." Since nothing is impossible with God, nothing can be impossible to importunate prayer. Jesus said, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," and therefore "nothing shall be impossible unto you." He declared that even mighty mountains can be moved in answer to the prayer of faith, even faith as small as a grain of mustard seed. The discovery of the use of atomic energy gives us a striking illustration of the unlimited power in that which is very small, for the tiny atom is invisible. Prayer, energized by even a small amount of faith, is far more powerful and effectual than this newly harnessed physical force that has revolutionized modern warfare. Prayer can change seemingly impossible situations.

Answers to prayer, however, are restricted by certain limitations. First, all requests must be in harmony with the will of God. When the divine will is unknown, faith always says, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Knowing the end from the beginning, the Lord alone knows what is best for our present and eternal welfare. Many selfish prayers are offered which God cannot in His wisdom answer. It would be inconsistent for Him to grant requests for personal favors when at the same time the best inter-

ests of others were not served. For example, we could hardly expect an all-wise God to grant the request of a small group for a cloudless sky in order to enjoy an outing when thousands were longing and praying for rain to end a terrible drought, which was threatening their very livelihood.

The Lord judges the motives, and therefore considers our requests from the viewpoint of the conscience. It is sincere prayer that is answered. When the motive is right, the conscience clear, and the prayer in harmony with the divine will, the sincere, earnest petition of a godly person is capable of achieving results impossible from a human viewpoint. The Scriptures are filled with examples of answered prayer for those things that are seemingly impossible. In this respect the book of Acts is still being written in all parts of the world. The answers to prayer, if they were all known and recorded, would fill a large volume of thrilling spiritual adventure. It is still true that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

"When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change, wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook." Sincere prayer changes things. It transforms darkness into light, doubting into faith, discouragement into hope, disappointment into confidence, and sorrow into rejoicing. Prayer does not change God; nor does it change His mind. This is not the reason for long delays in answered prayer. The delay usually indicates the need of a change in the petitioner, so that he may properly appreciate and appropriate the bequest. Also, circumstances must sometimes be changed, and this change requires time and patience. We must not forget that all

men are free moral agents with the power of choice and that the Lord will never interfere with that divinely given prerogative. He will never force the will of another in order to answer the prayer of the godliest saint. The prophet Daniel prayed and fasted three weeks before his prayer was answered, not because his petition was not heard, but because it required that much time for the angel Gabriel, with the help of Michael, to influence the king of Persia to grant the request.

Nothing would spoil a child more quickly and permanently than for a parent to give immediately everything he asked for. It would be the sure means of producing a self-centered, pampered, and utterly selfish character, obnoxious to all who have dealings with him at any time in life. Immediate answers to all our petitions would do us more harm than good. Instead of being kind, patient, and genuine Christians, we would become self-righteous, and bigoted Pharisees.

The greatest change wrought by prayer is conversion, the mightiest of all miracles. The transformation of a sinner into a saint is a change that cannot be explained. It can be known only by experience. Prayer took Joseph out of the Egyptian dungeon and made him governor of the kingdom and savior of his own people. The prayer of Moses brought victory to the untrained and poorly equipped army of Israel over the warlike Amalekites. Prayer closed the heavens against rain until the apostasy under Ahab and Jezebel was broken and Israel brought back to the worship of the true God. Prayer brought overwhelming defeat to the hosts of Midian through the instrumentality of Gideon and his three hundred men. Prayer delivered Daniel from the den of lions, and the

three Hebrews from the fiery furnace, and exalted them to positions of trust and honor above their jealous enemies. The record of answered prayer is inexhaustible.

"Prayer moves the arm which moves the world." This was one of D. L. Moody's favorite quotations. Fervent prayer has moving power. It moves the arm of Omnipotence in our behalf. Prayer ascends on the wings of faith to the throne of the Eternal and sets in motion divine and human agencies, so that our prayers are answered "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Prayer touches invisible chords and produces vibrations that ring through the universe and make melody through the eternal ages.

When the apostles prayed, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Acts 4:31. When Paul and Silas were in the Philippian jail, at midnight they prayed and sang praises to God, "and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." Acts 16:25, 26. As a result the jailer cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and he and his household were baptized, and the apostles were set free.

Prayer moves the arm of God to remove obstacles from the path of the praying saint. Jesus declared that prayer and fasting will give any of His saints the same kind of faith and power He had. No mountain of difficulty can stand in the way of the effectual, fervent prayers of a righteous man. Such prayers have changing, moving, shaking power that is irresistible.

"Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan." Prayer is the power that makes effectual the armor of God, so that the soldiers of the cross may "fight the good fight of faith" and become "more than conquerors through him that loved us." Without prayer the Christian warrior is helpless against the deceptions and onslaughts of the wicked spirits of darkness. Satan is the conqueror of the human race, and no man is able in his own strength to stand against the wiles of the devil. But Satan is a defeated foe, and is therefore no match for Christ, who has defeated him on every battlefield. An appeal through prayer to the great Emancipator assures the Christian of complete triumph. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

We are told that "at the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles." An appeal to Christ for help brings the struggling suppliant a reinforcement of mighty angels who excel in strength. As the result the hosts of evil fall back in defeat. Prayer is the power that gives defensive might to the encircling girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation. It whets the sword of the Spirit, so that it cuts its way through doubt and unbelief and causes men and women to cry out for salvation.

"Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse." This great storehouse contains the boundless resources of Omnipotence, the riches of the grace of God. This key puts the Christian in possession of greater wealth than that possessed by the multimillionaires of earth. It opens the great treasure house of truth to the child of faith, who seeks for Scriptural knowledge

as for hid treasure. It makes the Bible the living book of the living God, a mine of truth that is inexhaustible. Those who dig deep will be rewarded by multiplying discoveries of gems of light that will thrill the soul and make the pathway a "shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Those who merely scratch the surface will find but few gems and will have a religious experience correspondingly shallow.

"I know thy . . . poverty, (but thou art rich)," declared Jesus to the suffering Smyrneans. These early Christians were assured that temporal poverty could not rob them of their spiritual riches. They had laid up treasure in heaven and were rich toward God. Material poverty with spiritual power is far preferable to material wealth with spiritual weakness, a characteristic of the modern church. The rich poor man in possession of the key that unlocks the limitless storehouse of heaven is to be congratulated rather than the poor rich man with the key to the vaults of earthly wealth. Spiritual riches are not affected by inflation or depression. Many of the most wealthy in material things are moral paupers and spiritual bankrupts.

With the key of prayer available to every individual who exercises faith, is it not passing strange that so many are poverty stricken spiritually? Why should the sons and daughters of the great King, who has riches untold, be so reluctant to pray? As heirs of the kingdom of glory, why do they permit the key to spiritual wealth to rust from inaction?

In recent months scientists, statesmen, and military leaders have joined churchmen in declaring that the greatest need of mankind and the only hope of the modern

world is a great spiritual revival on a universal scale, a return to primitive godliness in character and conduct. Men and women are justly terrified over the possibilities of an atomic war. The present generation is not so alarmed as it should be, because but few realize what has happened and is about to happen in the future. Those who sense the seriousness of the hour believe that only a mighty resurgence of spiritual energy can save our civilization. Since spiritual power comes only in answer to prayer, the present situation constitutes a mighty challenge to Christians everywhere to engage in unceasing intercession. Our day demands a religion vitalized by prayer, which is the breath of life to the soul. Only the prayer of faith can release the levers on the divine switchboard in God's great powerhouse, so that the earth can be lightened with the power and glory of God, and His work can be quickly finished and cut short in righteousness under the refreshing showers of the latter rain.

Walking With God

4 "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8. This is one of those texts that seem to embrace the whole of Christianity. It is the sum of true religion and therefore a miniature gospel. It sets forth the "whole duty of man." Those who meet the requirements of this text fulfill the requirements of God and measure up to the standards of the Christian religion.

In this brief but comprehensive statement is enfolded what God expects of His people. It contains some of the musts of the religion of Christ. In college there are certain required subjects that must be taken in order to graduate. Others are called electives because the student can take his choice. In the school of Christ there are some required attainments that are absolutely necessary to salvation, and some of these are enumerated in our text. Those who from principle practice in their daily lives the essentials of justice, mercy, kindness, humility, and quiet

fellowship with God will meet the searching test of the judgment and graduate with honors from the school of experience and receive the reward of eternal life.

"Walking" is used in the Scriptures to describe a course of conduct as the result of character. Walking with God is the natural result of a godly character in those who have received the heavenly mold in contrast with the worldly mold. The following counsel is given to every individual: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Jer. 6:16. Paul urged the Ephesians to "walk not as . . . Gentiles walk" but to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." He also said, "I . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." He told them to "walk in love," and to "walk as children of light." We cannot walk with Christ and the world at the same time. We cannot travel the narrow way of restriction and self-discipline and the broad and easy way at the same time. There is no neutral ground. We are either for or against Christ, Christians or antichrists.

In walking with God seven things are involved, each of which will be discussed briefly. In the first place, it demands the practice of justice in all our dealings with our fellow men. There is altogether too much inhumanity to man, even in the church. God is called the God of justice. Justice and equity are the foundations of His throne and government. He loves justice and practices it in all His dealings with both friend and foe. Satan and his angels as well as all the wicked will bow the knee before their execution in the lake of fire and acknowledge that God has been just in all His dealings with them. An

important part of the song of Moses and of the Lamb is set forth in the words: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. 15:3. "'Because the righteousness of all that Thou hast done has been made manifest.'" Verse 4, Weymouth.

Absolute justice is difficult to put into practice in our daily lives. How often we learn that the harsh and cruel things we said were untrue and therefore unjust. We render altogether too many decisions in regard to others before the evidence is all in. We are inclined to question motives without any evidence for our decisions. Justice must not be left to the judges in courts of law or to the law-enforcement officers. We live in a time when "judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off" and when "truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." Isa. 59:14. We are told that the Lord sees this and is displeased because "there was no judgment." (Verse 15.) God refuses to walk with or fellowship with those who deal unjustly.

In the second place, God requires that we love mercy. We must be just and kind. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," is one of the beatitudes of Jesus. We will be treated as we treat others. We ask God in prayer to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. We ask Him to deal out mercy to us on the same basis and with the same spirit that we manifest in our dealings with others. Do we realize what we are praying? Are we ready to accept the proposition we make to the Lord? Are we willing to receive mercy from God in the same measure that we use in dealing it out to our fellow men?

The Lord said, "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice." No gift or sacrifice can suffice as a substitute for mercy. It is not enough that we deal mercifully, but we must "love mercy." It should be a deep-seated and abiding principle of life. An important part of "the sincere milk of the word" is the milk of human kindness. Kindness and mercy are the fruits of humility. The spirit of Pharisaism is proud and arrogant, critical and cruel. Only by the grace of God can we love mercy in an age prophetically described as "perilous" because "men shall be lovers of their own selves."

"The spirit of Pharisaism" is declared to be "the spirit of human nature," and is described in the following quotation: "The effort to earn salvation by one's own works, inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for their fellow-men. A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies. . . ."

"The Pharisees were of this class. They came forth from their religious services, not humbled with a sense of their own weakness, not grateful for the great privileges that God had given them. They came forth filled with spiritual pride, and their theme was, 'Myself, my feelings, my knowledge, my ways.' Their own attainments

became the standard by which they judged others. Putting on the robes of self-dignity, they mounted the judgment-seat, to criticize and condemn."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 177, 178.

The third fundamental principle revealed in our text is the grace of humility, "to walk humbly with thy God." Only humble people can walk with God, for He walks only with those who are humble. He refuses to keep company with the proud and haughty. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth," declared Jesus. "Blessed are the humble" is the rendering in another translation. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. 57:15; 66:2.

The Lord declared that He hates "a proud look" and a "haughty spirit." Jesus was "meek and lowly in heart." With Him was no sham or pretense or domineering spirit. He was always approachable and made men and women feel at ease in His presence. Nothing is more obnoxious than an egocentric, a braggart, a self-centered and self-conceited person. Flavel truthfully said, "They that know God will be humble, and they that know themselves cannot be proud." James Denning said, "No minister can create the impression that he is clever, and that Christ is all-sufficient at the same time." The great value of humility is set forth in the following statement: "If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be

one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 189. What an enormous increase in soulsaving would result if all God's remnant people would walk humbly with their God.

Also walking with God indicates unity. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" is a Scriptural question. In His prayer to the Father just before His ascension, Jesus' burden was for unity among His followers: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:21, 22. The secret of this unity is beautifully described in *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 312: "When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness."

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon a group of believers who were all of "one accord." A great change had been wrought during the ten days of heart searching in the upper room. At the beginning of that period they seemed to be hopelessly divided. There was a strife among them as to who would be accounted greatest in the kingdom of glory. As they drew near to Christ, the great center and magnet, they at the same time drew near to one another. Apostolic unity in our day will again bring apostolic results, a repetition of the power and fruitage of Pentecost.

Another of the divine requirements set forth in our

text is fellowship. To "live in quiet fellowship with your God," is another translation. The closeness of that fellowship is indicated by the statement of Jesus in John 15:15: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends." The Lord called Abraham "my friend," and he is spoken of as "the Friend of God." It has often been said that a man is known by his friends, or by the company he keeps. The Christian should be known by his friendly relationship with Christ, who is a friend who "sticketh closer than a brother."

We cannot enjoy the friendship of Christ and of the world at the same time. We are told that whoever "will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God," because "friendship of the world is enmity with God." James 4:4. Therefore the finest of all human friendships are formed among the followers of Christ. "Better than all the friendships of the world is the friendship of Christ's redeemed," is a statement in *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 374. In this fellowship there should be no pretense or sham or hypocrisy, but sincerity of the finest quality.

Walking also indicates progress. There is no stopping place in the pathway of Christians, for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. 4:18. We must never be satisfied with our present enlightenment or spiritual experience. This attitude made it impossible for Christ to help many of the Jews and especially the scribes and Pharisees. They felt whole spiritually, and therefore the Great Physician could not heal them. The same attitude prevails in the modern church whose members boast that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need

of nothing," while in God's sight they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" spiritually. To them Christ offers the gold of His faith and love and truth, the beautiful robe of His righteousness, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which constitutes a complete remedy for their lukewarmness in affection for God and man. (Rev. 3:14-18.)

And last but not least, walking with God is perfection in the sense that the term is used often in the Scriptures. To Abraham the Lord said, "I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect." Gen. 17:1. "Walk with me and be perfect," would be a proper translation. "Live ever mindful of my presence, and so be blameless," is another translation. Normal and continuous spiritual growth and progress is perfection. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." We are to be as perfect in our sphere as He is in His. The grain and flowers and trees are perfect according to their age as long as they have a normal growth, and the same is true of a child. It is on this basis that Noah and Job were declared to be perfect in their generations. We can be perfect while we are reaching toward the final goal of perfection and maturity in Christ when we shall reflect His image fully.

Of Enoch, who was a type of those who will be translated when Jesus returns, we read:

"Enoch's walk with God was not in a trance or a vision, but in all the duties of his daily life. He did not become a hermit, shutting himself entirely from the world; for he had, in the world, a work to do for God. In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast,

unwavering servant of God. His faith waxed stronger, his love became more ardent, with the lapse of centuries. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul. He lived in the atmosphere of heaven. . . .

"As year after year passed, deeper and deeper grew the tide of human guilt, darker and darker gathered the clouds of divine judgment. Yet Enoch, the witness of faith, held on his way, warning, pleading, and teaching, striving to turn back the tide of guilt and to stay the bolts of vengeance. The men of that generation mocked the folly of him who sought not to gather gold or silver, or to build up possessions here. But Enoch's heart was upon eternal treasures. He had looked upon the celestial city. He had seen the King in His glory in the midst of Zion. The greater the existing iniquity, the more earnest was his longing for the home of God. While still on earth, he dwelt, by faith, in the realms of light. . . .

"For three hundred years Enoch had been seeking purity of heart, that he might be in harmony with heaven. For three centuries he had walked with God. Day by day he had longed for a closer union; nearer and nearer had grown the communion, until God took him to Himself. He had stood at the threshold of the eternal world, only a step between him and the land of the blest; and now the portals opened, the walk with God, so long pursued on earth, continued, and he passed through the gates of the holy city, the first from among men to enter there. . . . To such communion God is calling us. As was Enoch's must be their holiness of character who shall be redeemed from among men at the Lord's second coming." —*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 329-331.

The Chief Quest of Life

5 We live in the most seeking, searching, questing generation of all history. In fact, the spirit of inquiry is the spirit of the age. It is hoped that the reader has a questing spirit in regard to that which is of paramount importance. It is a pleasure to minister to the spiritual needs of those who are controlled by a holy dissatisfaction with their present state and who long for more knowledge of divine truth and a deeper Christian experience.

Christ was unable to accomplish much for His chosen people, because at the time of His earthly visit they were complacent and self-satisfied and felt no need of what He came to give them. Like the modern Laodiceans, they felt "rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing," when they were actually "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and did not realize it. Like the Pharisee in the Temple, they boasted of their spiritual wealth and good works and were glad they were not like other men.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven," is the first of the beatitudes, and therefore the first step into the kingdom of grace. This is a divine blessing upon those who recognize their spiritual poverty, which is an absolute necessity to salvation. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled," or "'completely satisfied'" (Weymouth), is another of the beatitudes. It is always a pleasure to feed hungry people with either physical or spiritual food. Only those who know their needs and who hunger and thirst for satisfaction can enjoy a spiritual banquet of the bread and water of life. Eating and drinking are a great pleasure to those who are hungry and thirsty. Such persons are possessed by a questing spirit, which never rests until their souls are satisfied.

To a generation whose chief quest was for the material things of life Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33. Next to John 3:16 this is perhaps the most familiar text in the Bible, and is also a miniature Gospel, or little Bible. If obeyed, this text would assure righteousness and salvation. It is one of the priceless gems of truth set forth in the sermon on the mount, which was the greatest sermon ever preached in the history of the world. It was the master sermon by the Master Preacher. This was because it was His life in sermon form, for He always practiced what He preached. His life was a living epistle read and known of all men.

Another secret of the greatness of this sermon was the fact that it was preceded by an entire night of prayer. No wonder it was a masterpiece and contained the basic

principles of life. That morning Jesus ordained the twelve who were to constitute a sort of spiritual cabinet for the kingdom of grace, and therefore this sermon has been referred to as His inaugural address, in which He laid down the qualifications for heavenly citizenship. Those who reach this standard are members of the highest society in the world, and in one respect the most exclusive. They are "the saints of the most High."

The sermon was preached to a very large audience, described as "great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan." Matt. 4:25. Here was a cross section of humanity, representing all walks of life. And Christ's sermon was a world message of universal application and is just as up to date now as when it was spoken nineteen centuries ago on the mount of blessing. In it Jesus seems to have gathered the most precious gems out of the Old Testament mine of truth and reset them in a message that crowned all His teachings.

His was an audience of seekers. All were there with a questing spirit. All the people were in expectation. His was a restless audience, dissatisfied with prevailing conditions. They were groaning under the galling yoke of Roman totalitarianism, and longed for the deliverance promised in the Messianic hope. The dry ceremonies of a lifeless legalistic religion of righteousness by human works and credit left their souls unsatisfied.

As strange as it may seem, the disciples of Jesus were chiefly interested in positions of power and glory in the new kingdom they expected Jesus to establish. The scribes and Pharisees were present as spies with the hope of breaking the power of the new Teacher over the people.

Their chief quest was some means of entrapping Him. The soldiers of Pilate were present in case of a riot or an attempt to enthrone a king who would be a rival of Tiberias. The Romans knew of the anticipations of the Jews and were constantly on guard. The sick were there in quest of healing, and the poor in quest of food, both of which had been made available by His miracle-working power. Doubtless many were present who were seeking a new spiritual experience and longing for a new element to be brought into their religion. How these must have cheered the heart of the Master!

Jesus read the thoughts and intents and motives of every heart. He knew why each had come to that mountain retreat. Because of this knowledge He warned them against making the material things of life their chief quest. He said: "'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. . . . No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you

anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that ye need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.'" Matt. 6:19-33, R.S.V.

Jesus here dealt with the things that constitute the chief quest of life for mankind in general. After warning them against being anxious about and seeking for the temporal and transitory things of life, He turned to the positive, and gave them the best counsel ever given to the human race. He assured them that if they would put first things first in their seeking, the necessities of life would be vouchsafed unto them, and would be thrown in for good measure.

We live in the most materialistic age of all time, when the chief quest of life is for a living with all the comforts and conveniences that help make life pleasant and agreeable. If Jesus were living in this busy, greedy, grasping, covetous, restless generation of stress and strain and nervous tension, He would give the same counsel He gave two millenniums ago. It is good advice for all ages and classes: for children, students, teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, businessmen, farmers, carpenters, housewives, office workers, and preachers. In fact no person could possibly be an exception.

"Seek ye first" is equivalent to giving first place to things of first importance, to place the emphasis where it belongs, to have a true sense of values. Paul stated it thus in 2 Corinthians 4:18: "We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." (R.S.V.) Through the eye of faith Christians can see the invisible, which are the most valuable things of this life as well as of the life to come. The fruits of the Spirit are invisible to human sight, but their value is beyond estimate.

The first application of our text is to life at its beginning, when the very first lessons are being learned. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," is the same admonition in other terms. It is the duty of parents to see that the very first lessons of childhood are in regard to things of eternal interest, so that when the child grows to manhood he will not depart from the mold of earlier years. It is the boy that makes the man, and the importance of the early training cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore the first quests of life should include the kingdom and righteousness of God.

It also includes the first things of the day. In this respect Jesus practiced what He preached. Through the prophet He said: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Isa.

50:4-6. According to this scripture, Jesus was awakened at dawn of day by His Father for study and prayer, and this was the secret of His wisdom and loyalty to principle.

John R. Mott said: "If the hill back of Nazareth could give back its secret, if the Lake of Galilee could tell what it witnessed, if the desert places round about Jerusalem could tell their story, if the Mount of Olives could speak out and tell us what transpired there, they would all tell us, more than anything else, of the prayer life of our Lord. They would reveal its intensity, its unselfishness, its constancy, its godly fear, that made it irresistible."

There are more duties each day than most people can possibly perform, and therefore they must give first place to those of first importance. Duties are divided into three classes: first, those that must be done without further delay; second, those that ought to be done; and third, the duties that could be delayed several days or forever without special damage. By our actions we indicate what we consider of first importance by giving them first place. We take care of the musts first, and others if there is time.

This is beautifully illustrated by the experience of Jesus in the home of Martha and Mary, recorded in Luke 10:39-42: "As they pursued their journey He came to a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed Him to her house. She had a sister named Mary, who seated herself at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching. Martha meanwhile was busy and distracted in waiting at table, and she came and said, 'Master, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do all the waiting? Tell her to assist me.' 'Martha, Martha,' replied Jesus, 'you are anxious and worried about a multitude of things; and yet

only one thing is really necessary. Mary hath chosen the good portion and she shall not be deprived of it.' " (Weymouth.) "You are worried and excited about many things; but one thing is more necessary," is the Lamsa translation.

Jesus told His hearers to seek first "the kingdom of God." God's kingdom is divided into two phases: the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The first can be entered here and now, and the second is ushered in with the Second Advent of Christ. Which kingdom did Jesus refer to? The reference doubtless includes both, but especially the first, to which Jesus made reference when He said, "The kingdom of God is within you," and comes "not with observation," or outward show, as does the kingdom of glory. The Jews failed because they placed the emphasis on the latter to the neglect of the first, and therefore they failed to recognize the King of grace.

According to Colossians 1:12, 13, it is our privilege to be "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" and be delivered "from the power of darkness" and translated into the kingdom of God's Son in this life when we enter the kingdom of grace. In fact, only those who have this experience can have any part in the final physical translation into the kingdom of glory when Jesus returns. Here, therefore, is where the chief emphasis should be placed at the present time. The first answer to our petition, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," has to do with the kingdom of grace and our translation into it.

Next we are to seek first "his righteousness," and this will be discussed in succeeding chapters. The divine promise is that if the seeking of these things is given

the pre-eminence in our lives, "all these things," the material necessities of life, "shall be added unto you," or shall be yours as well. He is speaking of the things we eat, drink, and wear, which are used to embrace all of the material things necessary for our very existence physically. The promise, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure," was fulfilled to ancient Israel during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and will again be fulfilled to modern Israel during the falling of the seven last plagues. A pot of manna was placed in the ark of the covenant beside the law of God as a pledge to all future generations that those who obey God will be fed, even though it becomes necessary to rain manna from heaven. In the final crisis, when every earthly support will be cut off, the promise of our text will be "exceeding great and precious." The promise includes the redeemed state in the heavenly Canaan, the Paradise restored, "a land flowing with milk and honey," where the pilgrims of earth "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more" because "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. 7:16, 17) when "the perfect state of things is come, all that is imperfect will be brought to an end." (1 Cor. 13:10, Weymouth.)

Righteousness by Faith

6 After warning against the human passion for material things, Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33. One of the ancient prophets said, "Gather yourselves together, . . . before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Zeph. 2:1-3.

Righteousness is absolutely necessary to salvation, and its possession on the basis of faith has been the very center and core of the gospel down through all the ages and is declared to be "the third angel's message in verity." It was the message of righteousness by faith and the crisis it produced in the early church that made necessary the holding of the Jerusalem council. It also gave to Christendom the books of Romans and Galatians, which were written to counteract the teachings of the Judaizers. This

was also the battle cry of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, when "kingdoms fell and thrones trembled" under the impact of the message that restored freedom of religion to the world after a long period of tyranny in things spiritual.

Righteousness by faith was the substance of the preaching that produced the great revival in decadent Protestantism in the eighteenth century. It was a part of that message that culminated in the great Second Advent Movement. It brought a great crisis in the history of God's remnant people at and after the Minneapolis General Conference session in 1888.

This is the message that will finally bring the latter rain and loud cry, which will finish the work quickly and "cut it short in righteousness." "The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth."—ELLEN G. WHITE in *Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892. "Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 19. The reference is to Revelation 18:1-5, which pictures the final warning message to the world "as it swells to a loud cry," as the result of the refreshing showers of the latter rain.

The apostle Paul wrote: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first,

and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Rom. 1:16-18. Paul could not always say that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. In fact, at one time he was very much ashamed and considered Christ the worst of all impostors and Christianity as a counterfeit religion to Judaism. He showed his utter contempt for Christians by relentlessly persecuting them even unto death, and felt that he was doing God's will.

The ardent Pharisee also shared the attitude of the Greeks and Romans that the gospel is "foolishness" and the cross an "offence" and a "stumblingstone." Roman writers spoke of Christianity as "a pernicious and detestable superstition," and considered Christians as "the offscourings of the earth." It meant a great deal to become a Christian in those days. What produced the great change in Saul of Tarsus? He met Jesus at the gate of Damascus, and fell in love with Him. "At the gate of Damascus the vision of the Crucified One changed the whole current of his [Paul's] life."—*Education*, p. 65.

Now the apostle could say: "Yet all that was gain to me—for Christ's sake I have reckoned it loss. Nay, I even reckon all things as pure loss because of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. And for His sake I have suffered the loss of everything, and reckon it all as mere refuse, in order that I may win Christ and be found in union with Him, not having a righteousness of my own, derived from the Law, but that which arises from faith in Christ—the righteousness which comes

from God through faith. I long to know Christ and the power which is in His resurrection, and to share in His sufferings and die even as He died; in the hope that I may attain to the resurrection from among the dead." Phil. 3:7-11, Weymouth.

The apostle gives three reasons why he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and genuine belief and experience in these three things will make anyone unashamed. First, the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." He knew this, not as a mere theory, but as an actual experience. His second reason was that "therein is the righteousness of God revealed" on the basis of faith, and finally that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." In this chapter we shall place the emphasis on the second reason.

The Scriptures make it clear that only the righteous will be saved. Note the following texts: "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4:18. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:46. "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." Ps. 37:29. "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." Isa. 26:2. "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." Isa. 60:21. Righteousness is the passport to heaven.

Righteousness is defined in Scripture as obedience to God's law, the standard of righteousness. "It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us."

Deut. 6:25. "All thy commandments are righteousness," declared the psalmist in Psalms 119:172. "All unrighteousness is sin," and "sin is the transgression of the law," are New Testament statements. God's commandments are said to be "exceeding broad," embracing "the whole duty of man." Webster defines *righteousness* as "purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity of heart and life to divine law."

Righteousness therefore has to do with both the inner and the outer life, both character and conduct. It is first of all right being, which always leads to right doing. It is righteous character that produces righteous conduct. It is being right and then doing right. It is both character and conduct that are in harmony with God's holy law. "If the heart is right, your words, your dress, your acts, will all be right."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 158. "You must *be* good before you can *do* good. You can not exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rose-bush to yield its fragrant bloom, or the vine its purple clusters."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 183.

The meaning of righteousness and the means of receiving it are beautifully set forth in the following statement: "Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God; and 'God is love.' It is conformity to the law of God; for 'all Thy commandments are righteousness;' and 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by re-

ceiving Him. Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, . . . without money and without price.' 'Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord,' and 'This is His name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness.'"—*Ibid.*, p. 34.

The purpose of the gospel is to save us *from* and not *in* our sins. It demands victory over sin and provides the power to make that victory possible. The robe of righteousness is not a cloak for sin, as is made clear in the following statements: "No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 555.

"In the religion of Christ there is a regenerating influence that transforms the entire being, lifting man above every debasing, groveling vice, and raising the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven. Linked to the Infinite One, man is made partaker of the divine nature. Upon him the shafts of evil have no effect; for he is clothed with the panoply of Christ's righteousness."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 51, 52. "When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the sufferings of the Son of God."—ELLEN G.

WHITE, quoted in A. G. Daniells, *Christ Our Righteousness* (1926), p. 121.

The righteousness of Christ is the wedding garment of the church, or bride of Christ, and therefore the necessary preparation for His return. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Rev. 19:7, 8. In Ephesians 5:25-27 we are told that Christ died for the church "in order to make her holy, cleansing her with the baptismal water by the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle or any other defect, but to be holy and unblemished." (Weymouth.)

Note the following quotations: "Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 725. "By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given 'that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,' 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' The fine linen, says the Scripture, 'is the righteousness of saints.' It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. . . . Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen-dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided, can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This

covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. . . . This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out, a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.'—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 310, 311.

The wedding garment, or robe of Christ's righteousness, is therefore a gift. It has in it "not one thread of human devising," because it was made "in the loom of heaven," and to Christ's church, or bride, it was granted. Her part is to put it on. When Adam and Eve sinned, their beautiful robe of innocence departed, and by their own works they made girdles, or aprons, of fig leaves, but this man-made garment was not sufficient in the presence of God. In their shame they hid themselves. Then God made coverings for them from the skins of the very animal that was typical of the Lamb of God, and "clothed them." This indicates that the robe of Christ's righteousness is provided through the death of Christ and is received by faith as a gift. The importance of this subject is indicated by the following statement:

"Our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and on kindred truths."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 301. Is it any wonder that it is declared to be "the third angel's message in verity," and is the third angel's message, which "is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in large measure," and that it is "the sweetest melodies that come from human lips"? It will be all this and much more to all who know the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ as an experience.

Our Title to Heaven

7 There are two kinds of righteousness. The false, or counterfeit, is based on human effort alone, and is worthless as far as salvation is concerned.

Jesus said, "I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20. This statement indicates that God can make no exception. Those whose righteousness is based on legalistic ceremonies can "in no case" be saved, because their righteousness is no better than "filthy rags," or a "fig-leaf" covering, in which they cannot appear in the divine presence.

Genuine righteousness is received by faith, with all credit given to Christ. It lays "the glory of man in the dust" and does "for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself." (*Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers*, Series A, No. 9, p. 62.) It is therefore "the sweetest melodies that can come from human lips." It is "glad tidings of great joy," and "the sweetest story ever

told." The word *gospel* means "good news," and since righteousness by faith is the positive phase of the gospel, it is therefore "the third angel's message in verity." The most effective means of exposing the counterfeit is to reveal the genuine.

These two antagonistic kinds of righteousness, or means of obtaining righteousness, are skillfully placed in contrast by the apostle Paul in the following statements: "To what conclusion does this bring us? Why, that the Gentiles, who were not in pursuit of righteousness, have overtaken it—a righteousness, however, which arises from faith; while the descendants of Israel, who were in pursuit of a Law that could give righteousness, have not arrived at one. And why? Because they were pursuing a righteousness which should arise not from faith, but from what they regarded as merit." "For I bear witness that they possess an enthusiasm for God, but it is an unenlightened enthusiasm. Ignorant of the righteousness which God provides and building their hopes upon a righteousness of their own, they have refused submission to God's righteousness." Rom. 9:30-32; 10:2, 3. Weymouth.

The worthlessness of a religion of righteousness and salvation by works is described in *Steps to Christ*, page 49: "There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worth nothing. When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in

the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all, and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek. A profession of Christ without this deep love, is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery."

There are two phases of righteousness by faith, and these are beautifully described in the following quotation: "The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven."—ELLEN G. WHITE in *Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895. Justification, or imputed righteousness, gives us our title *to* heaven; and sanctification, or imparted righteousness, gives us our fitness *for* heaven. These are two separate and distinct works that must be accomplished in the order given. The right, or passport, to heaven must be followed by a preparation for heaven. The first is the work of a moment, and the second the work of a lifetime.

In this chapter we are discussing our title to heaven, which is received through justification, or imputed righteousness. A title is a name, right, or privilege bestowed or conferred by a government, ruler, or institution, such as a title of nobility, a diploma, or a degree. It is an outward transaction that affects the standing or reputation of a person rather than his character. Justification is a sort of bookkeeping transaction. It is something done for a person in which he has no part except to receive it as a

gift. Justification does change our standing before God and His law. It does not *make* a person righteous; it rather *counts* him righteous, and this is an important distinction. He is *made* righteous through sanctification.

Note the following definitions of *justification* by faith: "To set to the account of a person. To charge or credit a person with innocence. Not implying a transfer of moral qualities but of legal merit." "To show to be just or innocent; to vindicate; to declare guiltless or blameless; to exonerate." "The judicial act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous, or justly freed from obligation to pay the penalty, and justly restored to divine favor."

This is illustrated by the pardon issued by a governor. This pardon does not in any way change the character of the condemned criminal. It only changes his standing before the law and the court that once condemned him. Likewise, the decree, or verdict, of a judge does not alter the character of the accused. It only imputes guilt or innocence on the basis of the evidence presented and the law violated or involved. However, it does affect the court records and the standing of the accused in the community.

Justification, or imputed righteousness, involves much more than mere pardon, or forgiveness of sin. This is made clear in Romans 4:1-8: "What then shall we say that Abraham, our earthly forefather, has gained? For if he was held to be righteous on the ground of his actions, he has something to boast of: but not in the presence of God. For what says the Scripture? 'And Abraham believed God, and this was placed to his credit as righteousness' (Gen. xv. 6). But in the case of a man who works, pay is not reckoned as a favour but a debt; whereas in the case

of a man who pleads no actions of his own, but simply believes in Him who declares the ungodly free from guilt, his faith is placed to his credit as righteousness. In this way David also tells of the blessedness of the man to whose credit God places righteousness, apart from his actions. 'Blessed,' he says, 'are those whose iniquities have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered over. Blessed is the man of whose sin the Lord will not take account' (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2)." (Weymouth.)

Forgiveness is an important part of justification, but it also involves the complete covering of the sins of the past and the placing of the righteousness, or character, of Christ to the sinner's account. The following comments are to the point: "Justification is the immediate result of forgiveness. God cannot think a man to be other than he is; but he can act towards him better than he deserves, can treat a sinner as only a righteous man deserves to be treated. This is justification." "Justification includes more than pardon. . . . *The very terms imply a difference.* To pardon is to waive the execution of the penal sanction of the Law. To justify is to declare that the demands of the Law are satisfied, not waived. Pardon is a sovereign act; justification, a judicial act. . . . *Pardon is remission of penalty*, in the absence of a satisfaction. It is not an act of justice. But justification proceeds on the ground of a satisfaction. One is the remission of punishment; the other is a declaration that there is no ground for the infliction of punishment."—*Pulpit Commentary* on Galatians 2:16.

Justification, therefore, deals only with the past, and has nothing whatever to do with the present or future. It deals with sin, and there can be no sin until sin has

been committed, and then it is in the past. Paul declared that "all alike have sinned, and all consciously come short of the glory of God, gaining acquittal from guilt by His free unpurchased grace through the deliverance which is found in Christ Jesus. He it is whom God put forward as a Mercy-Seat, rendered efficacious through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness—because of the passing over, in God's forbearance, of the sins previously committed—with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, His righteousness, that He may be shown to be righteous Himself, and the giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus. Where then is there room for your boasting? It is for ever shut out. On what principle? On the ground of merit? No, but on the ground of faith. For we maintain that it is as the result of faith that a man is held to be righteous, apart from actions done in obedience to Law." Rom. 3:23-28, Weymouth.

Because it deals with "the sins that are past," justification is therefore an instantaneous transaction, the work of a moment. This is illustrated in the justifying of the publican in the Temple. The very moment he cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," he was justified, or declared free from all guilt, and he received his title to heaven. The same is true of the thief on the cross. When he turned to Christ and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," Jesus answered, "You ask to be remembered then, verily thou art assured now," and the former criminal was immediately justified and given his title to heaven. If he had been taken down from the cross and had lived on for years, he would have to be fitted for heaven through sanctification, or Christian growth, which is a gradual work of character transfor-

mation. Full provision has been made for salvation under all circumstances and stages of growth, the completed process being left for the school of the hereafter.

One writer illustrated justification thus: "Justification is God's own bridge which stretches across the pit of iniquity and leads to our heavenly home. The Word tells us that God is the architect of the bridge, that He fashioned it through grace, and its cornerstone is redemption through the blood of Christ, and that its approach is by faith alone."—CHARLES J. WOODBRIDGE.

The chief result of justification is described in Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the peace of reconciliation that is indescribably glorious, as all can testify who have known it by experience.

The following texts also make it clear that human works have nothing whatever to do with imputed righteousness or justification: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9. "You and I, though we are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, know that it is not through obedience to Law that a man can be declared free from guilt, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. We have therefore believed in Christ Jesus, for the purpose of being declared free from guilt, through faith in Christ and not through obedience to Law. For through obedience to Law no human being shall be declared free from guilt." Gal. 2:15, 16, Weymouth.

All the obedience of a future lifetime cannot remove the guilt of one past sin. It can be taken care of only through faith in the atoning blood of Christ and the

imputation of His life and character to the sinner's account. This makes it possible for God to look upon the sinner as if he had never sinned, and this is indeed good news. "The only way in which he [the sinner] can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light. He can say with rejoicing, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."'" — ELLEN G. WHITE, quoted in *Christ Our Righteousness*, p. 142.

With the past so completely taken care of by the exercise of faith, and in a moment of time, the sinner is declared as guiltless and innocent as if he had never fallen. With the confession of sin he is immediately forgiven and therefore cleansed from all unrighteousness. Being righteous, he has his title to heaven. He is ready for heaven all the time he is getting ready through sanctification. As long as he maintains his title through justification and is growing normally through sanctification, he is perfect in the sight of God and a candidate for heaven. His title is a passport to the kingdom of glory.

Our Fitness for Heaven

8 "The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven."

When we are justified, the words of Jesus to the sinful woman whom He had forgiven, apply to us, "Go, and sin no more." With the past taken care of through imputed righteousness as completely as if we had never sinned, power is then available to keep us from falling. This is accomplished through sanctification, imparted righteousness, or spiritual growth, which is the work of a lifetime.

"Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the

next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience."—*Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 560, 561.

Growth is always gradual, so much so that it cannot be discerned with the naked eye. The results can be seen over a period of time. In the realm of nature, growth is affected by soil, water, climate, and cultivation, so that under some environments it is more rapid than others, but it is always a slow process. The same is true of spiritual growth. Although through the exercise of faith we may be instantly justified and obtain our title to heaven, the fitness for heaven through character development is gradual, the speed depending on the spiritual environments for which the individual is responsible.

The Scriptures declare that we are "born of the Spirit" through the instrumentality of the Word. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1:23. Then follows the instruction: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter 2:2. This growth from birth to maturity spiritually is beautifully described in Ephesians 4:11-15. The gifts of the Spirit are "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by

the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." "Till we all of us arrive at oneness in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and at mature manhood and the stature of full-grown men in Christ," is the Weymouth translation.

The growth of sanctification is silent and invisible but continuous. It is produced by divine power even though it depends on our cooperation. The chief ambition of children is to reach the maturity of their parents. They sometimes become impatient because of the slow process of growth, but there is no need of concern if they partake regularly of plenty of fresh air, wholesome food, pure water, and adequate physical exercise. This is our part in physical growth, which is necessary to the maintenance of health and the assurance of further growth.

"Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power,—these are the true remedies. . . . The use of natural remedies requires an amount of care and effort that many are not willing to give. Nature's process of healing and upbuilding is gradual, and to the impatient it seems slow. The surrender of hurtful indulgences requires sacrifice. But in the end it will be found that nature, untrammelled, does her work wisely and well. Those who persevere in obedience to her laws will reap the reward in health of body and health of mind."—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 127. Regularity in sleep, meals, and exercise will do marvelous things for the human body, but it is a price that few are willing to pay.

The same is true of spiritual health and growth. The

daily reading and study of the Scriptures, regularity in prayer and attendance at divine services, and spiritual exercise through missionary activity require effort that altogether too many professed Christians are not willing to make. They fail to feed, nurture, and cultivate their spiritual natures, and the results are evident in their Christian experience. We must cooperate with the spiritual laws that govern our souls if we would grow normally in religious things. Otherwise we will suffer from spiritual malnutrition and become stunted and dwarfed in religious experience. The individual is responsible for the results of his faithfulness or neglect.

The word *fitness* indicates a process requiring time. Training and education are gradual, and can be speeded up or slowed down by the interest and cooperation of the individual, or the lack of them. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would "guide you into all truth" and "teach you all things," and both guidance and teaching indicate a slow process requiring a lifetime. In His prayer to the Father Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17. But since we are sanctified, or set apart, only by the truth we know and obey, it is evident that sanctification is the work of a lifetime, as is our acquirement of the knowledge of the Word of God.

The gradual change through character development is also indicated by the fact that we are changed by beholding, as is described in the following text: "And all of us, with unveiled faces, reflecting like bright mirrors the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another, even as derived from the Lord the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:18, Weymouth. "As the student of the Bible beholds the Redeemer, there

is awakened in the soul the mysterious power of faith, adoration, and love. Upon the vision of Christ the gaze is fixed, and the beholder grows into the likeness of that which he adores."—*Education*, p. 192.

"By the life we live through the grace of Christ, the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God, express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 312.

The word *imparted* indicates something done in us which becomes a part of us and in which we have a part to act. *Imparted* means "to share, to allow another to partake in; as the impartation of knowledge." The only way a teacher can impart knowledge to the students in his class, or a minister to his congregation, is by the cooperation of the hearers. Those who obtain the most out of the instruction given are those who show an interest and who practice concentration and meditation. For this reason some advance much more rapidly than others. There are those in every classroom and church audience who hear and retain but 10 per cent of what is given. Others get 25, 50, 75, or 100 per cent, according to the extent of their cooperation with the speaker. Their growth in knowledge and experience is therefore in proportion to their attention and interest.

An important part in imparted righteousness is the surrender of the will, and this sometimes means a terrific struggle, as with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane,

when He sweat blood in order to say, "Not my will, but thine, be done." The battle itself is "the good fight of faith," for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The victory is a gift and is therefore already won. Every Christian soldier can say with confidence, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:17. In fact He "always causeth us to triumph in Christ," in "every place." 2 Cor. 2:14.

The struggle on our part is therefore in the surrender of our stubborn wills. The prophet declared that man by nature is "obstinate," with a neck like "an iron sinew" and a brow like "brass." (Isa. 48:4.) It is therefore difficult to turn him from his course or make an impression on his mind. Re-creation is therefore much more difficult than the original creation, because in the former God must get the consent of man's stubborn and obstinate will.

"The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight—the greatest battle that was ever fought by man—is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. . . . The will must be placed on the side of God's will. God alone can give us the victory. . . .

"The only hope for us if we would overcome is to unite our will to God's will, and work in cooperation with Him, hour by hour, and day by day. We can not retain self, and yet enter the kingdom of God. If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self, and the reception of the mind of Christ."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 203-206.

"Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love." "What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You can not change your heart, you can not of yourself give to God its affections; but you can *choose* to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. . . . Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 39, 52.

Justification, or imputed righteousness, has to do with the act and guilt of sin, and sanctification, or imparted righteousness, deals with the nature and power of sin.

We are responsible for our conduct, for the acts of sin, but we are not responsible for our sin nature, which is ours by inheritance. Forgiveness of sin is one thing, and victory over and deliverance from the power of sin is another. "Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the dominion of Satan. But before we are delivered from Satan's power without we must be delivered from his power within."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 174, 175.

Though it is important that we be saved from sin as an action, it is even more important that we know the power that controls the sin nature and through the miracle-

working power of God be given "the divine nature," so that we "do by nature the things contained in the law." "The forgiveness of sins is not the sole result of the death of Jesus. He made the infinite sacrifice, not only that sin might be removed, but that human nature might be restored, rebeautified, reconstructed from its ruins, and made fit for the presence of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 537.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. 5:10. Justification brings reconciliation, which must be followed by a life of victory over sinful tendencies. "The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

To keep from sinning is the work of imparted righteousness. The struggle with the sin nature and the completeness of victory through the agency of the Holy Spirit is described in Galatians 5:16, 17: "Let your lives be guided by the Spirit, and then you will certainly not indulge the cravings of your lower natures. For the cravings of the lower nature are opposed to those of the Spirit, and the cravings of the Spirit are opposed to those of the lower nature; because these are antagonistic to each other, so that you cannot do everything to which you are inclined." (Weymouth.) Then the apostle names the "works of the flesh," or "the cravings of your lower natures," followed by "the fruit of the Spirit," which is

"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." What a beautiful harvest in contrast with the natural doings of the lower nature. This change is brought about by imparted righteousness.

The following texts describe the experiences that come through sanctification: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 2:20; 6:14. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1-4.

It is indeed wonderful to be delivered from the feelings of guilt and condemnation, and this is accomplished through justification. It is the privilege of a Christian to know this freedom from condemnation continuously because of pardon from the sins of the past and deliverance from the dominion of the sin nature through the power of the Holy Spirit. "There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought

about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."
—*Ibid.*, p. 172.

The following statement describes the same experience: "When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ, becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies, is impregnable to the assaults of Satan."—*Ibid.*, pp. 323, 324.

In imparted righteousness Christ dwells in our hearts through His Holy Spirit and lives out His own life of perfect obedience in us. Through faith His own righteousness is imparted to us. "Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. . . . By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 311, 312.

The results of this experience are described in Isaiah 32:17, 18: "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." This is righteousness by faith.

The New Covenant

9 The plan of redemption is based on a covenant relationship between God and man. The return of Christ is described thus: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Ps. 50:3-5. Only those who have entered into a covenant with God by sacrificing their own will and ways can be saved in His kingdom of glory at the Second Advent of Christ.

A covenant is an agreement between two or more persons that must be confirmed and made binding by what is spoken of in law as a sacrifice, consideration, or pledge, which is forfeited in case of a failure to live up to the promises made. The covenant between God and man is dependent upon a previous covenant between the Father and Son: "Before the foundations of the earth were laid,

the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, 'It is finished,' He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares, 'Father, it is finished.'—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 834.

God's covenant with man is called "the everlasting covenant," "the perpetual covenant," "the new covenant," and "the covenant of promise." It is coexistent with "the everlasting gospel," as both have been in existence since the entrance of sin and the first gospel promise recorded in Genesis 3:15. The Father pledged or sacrificed His only-begotten Son with the risk of an eternal separation as the assurance that His part of the compact would be fulfilled, and man must surrender his heart and will and life to make binding his part of the agreement, and if he fails, he forfeits eternal life.

Of the everlasting covenant we read: "Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ. It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; it had been accepted by faith; yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a *new* covenant. . . . It is called the 'second,' or 'new' covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 370, 371. The two covenants are also called the first and old, and the second and new, because this is the order in which the experience always comes to the individual, just as the first and old birth always precedes the second

and new or spiritual birth. No person can be "born again" until after he has experienced the physical birth by which he comes into the world.

Through the new birth we enter into the new covenant and receive a new heart, new mind, new nature, new experience, and new inheritance. When through this new creation we become new creatures, all things become new. Even the old commandments become new because of their new meaning to the Christian. When written on the fleshy tables of the heart, the law of God takes on a new significance. (1 John 2:7-10; 2 John 5, 6.) Righteousness and salvation by faith are an experience that follows an attempt to obtain them by human effort, and thus God's law and the promise of obedience are on a different basis and take on a new meaning.

The basic principles of the new covenant are described in Jeremiah 31:33, 34: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Jeremiah 31:32-34 is quoted in Hebrews 8:6-12 with the explanation that the new covenant is better than the old because it is "established upon better promises." The first covenant is faulty because it is built upon faulty human promises, which man is unable to fulfill because of the weakness of human nature. A promise is no better

than the ability of the person to translate it into a reality, and Jesus declared that those who have the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees based on human effort and credit "shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is only by faith in the promises of God that we can obtain righteousness and salvation. God is abundantly able to fulfill the promise: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," and "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This is the new or everlasting covenant that is based on far "better promises" than sinful human beings can possibly make.

The Decalogue is the basis of both covenants, the difference being the place it is written and the quality of the promises to obey. The same law without any change is made with the same people, "the house of Israel," or the people of God. The new covenant transfers the law of God to the mind and heart so that our thoughts and affections are in harmony with it, and being "partakers of the divine nature," we "do by nature the things contained in the law." Then obedience is no longer a drudgery but a pleasure, for it is always easy to do what is in our hearts rather than to act from a mere sense of duty.

Obedience to the law written in the heart and mind is not only the new covenant but also righteousness by faith. Through the psalmist Christ said: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart." Ps. 40:8-10. The only obedience, or righteousness, worthy of the name

is again described in Isaiah 51:7: "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." This is "the obedience of faith," which is motivated by love.

Obedience based on love is always a delight and never a burden or sacrifice. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. We are told that those who "rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation," and are not "moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ," but seek "to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven," have a religion that is worth nothing, because "a profession of Christ without this deep love, is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery." (*Steps to Christ*, p. 49.)

The secret of the new covenant experience of righteousness by faith is the result of the effectual workings of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote: "Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." 2 Cor. 3:1-3, R.S.V.

Since the Corinthian believers were the fruit of Paul's ministry, they were living letters, or epistles, of recommendation, and therefore the very best evidence of his divine call to the ministry. Letters and books never speak

their own thoughts or change the message of the writer or author, just as a stenographer does not change the wording or meaning of the letter dictated. Believers are not the letters of those who bring them the gospel message; they are "the epistles of Christ." Paul said that "all can see that you are a letter of Christ entrusted to our care." (Weymouth.)

It was the Decalogue that was written on "tables of stone" by "the finger of God." We chisel in stone the messages we want to endure. Job said, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!" and then, remembering their importance to future generations, he added, "That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" Job 19:23, 24. The message of the Ten Commandments was engraved in tables of granite because it was the standard of righteousness and the rule of the coming judgment and must be obeyed by all men in all ages.

Not only the law but also the Scriptures have been written with ink on parchment, paper, and cloth. "Of making many books there is no end," declared the ancient prophet, and his statement applies with far greater meaning in this age of printing, reading, and studying. All books are written on paper, and the thousands of libraries are filled with them, and ten thousand new ones are published every year. More than one million newspaper editions and two hundred thousand magazine editions are printed each year in the United States, and they are all epistles to the human race. But few of them are known and read by very many people. That is also true of the Bible, which is known as the neglected Book, even though it is the most popular of all books as far as circulation is concerned.

It is now printed in whole or in part in more than eleven hundred languages, but is read by a comparative few and known by fewer still.

The book of nature, called the illustrated edition of the Bible, is more widely known and read than the Scriptures. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." Ps. 19:1-3. In every language the word of God through His created works is read and known. "For, from the very creation of the world, His invisible perfections—namely His eternal power and divine nature—have been rendered intelligible and clearly visible by His works, so that these men are without excuse." Rom. 1:20, Weymouth.

But the characters of genuine Christians, who are the epistles of Christ, are also translated into all languages and are "known and read of all men." It is said that "love is the universal language." A. T. Robertson declared that "professing Christians are the Bible that men read and know."—*Word Pictures in the New Testament* on 2 Corinthians 3:2. The contents of these living epistles cannot be hidden from our fellow men. Someone has said, "What you do makes so much noise I cannot hear what you say." Actions always speak louder than words.

In this connection the following is to the point: "It is not only by preaching the truth, not only by distributing literature, that we are to witness for God. Let us remember that a Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity, and that a cheap Christian character works more harm in the world than the character of a worldling. Not all the books written

can serve the purpose of a holy life. Men will believe, not what the minister preaches, but what the church lives. Too often the influence of the sermon preached from the pulpit is counteracted by the sermon preached in the lives of those who claim to be advocates of truth. . . . The lives of professing Christians who do not live the Christ life are a mockery to religion. . . . The truth for this time is to appear in its power in the lives of those who believe it, and is to be imparted to the world. Believers are to represent in their lives its power to sanctify and ennoble."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 21, 22.

In the new covenant the writing of the law and Scriptures in the heart and mind is done by "the Spirit of the living God," who is Christ's personal representative, or vicegerent. In this experience the message of the law and gospel is not a dead letter. It is not written on cold and lifeless stone, or with ink on paper or cloth. It is written in the intellect and affections, and thus becomes a vital part of the character. The best of all the translations of the Scriptures are the texts that have been translated into experience.

The chief difference between the old and new covenants, which have existed side by side during the entire reign of sin, is also the difference between righteousness by works and righteousness by faith. The first is the attempt in human strength to obey instruction written on stone, paper, or cloth, and the second is obedience to the same instruction written by the Holy Spirit in the mind and on the fleshy tables of the heart. This writing is not in Greek, or Latin, or any dead or unknown language. It does not need an interpreter, but is "known and read of all men."

What do others read in your life, Scripture or fiction,

consistency or contradictions, sincerity or hypocrisy? Are you a living, walking, moving Bible? The sermons we see are of far more value than those we hear.

"Lo! Christ makes life a poem
Written well with loving deeds;
And life's a song of gladness
Sung by serving human needs.
And prayer's a constant friendship
With our Lord who makes life new.
And life's a living sermon,
Preached in everything we do!"

ADLAI A. ESTEB.

Freedom From Worry

10 The pastor of a large city church recently submitted to his members a questionnaire on sermon topic preferences, and the first choice of his congregation was "How Religion Can Eliminate Worrying." The second choice was "Ways to Increase Religious Faith." Ours is an age of worry and stress and tension, when the nerves of men and women are worn and threadbare. Many are cracking up under the nervous strain, resulting in ever-increasing insanity and suicide. The human spirit seems unable to meet the complexities and confusion of modern life. Many books with suggested remedies have been written, but their corrective influence has been practically negligible. Human panaceas have largely failed to arrest the progress of the disease, and peace and calmness and tranquillity are still strangers to mankind.

But there is a cure for worry that is known by experience in the lives of all who have given it a fair trial. It is revealed in the Book that sets forth the basic principles

of the life that is more abundant. Peace and rest and quietness and assurance are the fruits of righteousness by faith. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isa. 32:17, 18. "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established." Isa. 54:13, 14. The psalmist said, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Ps. 119:165. How precious this promise should be to those who are so sensitive and easily hurt and offended, often over trifles. Proud flesh is a disease not only of the body but also of the spirit.

There are many secrets of a life of peace and tranquillity, but in this chapter we shall consider the three that seem to bring the greatest blessing to the largest number of people. The first of these is the ability to forget the mistakes and unpleasant experiences of the past. This was an important factor in the happy Christian experience of the apostle Paul. He said: "I do not say that I have already won the race or have already reached perfection. But I am pressing on, striving to lay hold of the prize for which also Christ has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not imagine that I have yet laid hold of it. But this one thing I do—forgetting everything which is past and stretching forward to what lies in front of me, with my eyes fixed on the goal I push on to secure the prize of God's heavenward call in Christ Jesus. Therefore let all of us who are mature believers cherish these thoughts." Phil. 3:12-15, Weymouth.

In the first place, Paul frankly acknowledged that he had not yet reached the goal of perfection, and such an attitude is absolutely necessary to further progress. Advancement in knowledge and experience has come to a dead end in those who say by words or attitude, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Such was the spirit of Pharisaism.

In the second place, the lack of full attainment did not discourage Paul. "I press toward the mark," he said courageously. Everything depends on the direction we are going. Oliver Wendell Holmes said: "The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are going." Teachers are not concerned over the students, or preachers the members, who are moving in the right direction, even though the progress be slow. Growth is always gradual, whether in nature or character building.

In the third place, in order to reach the prize of perfection, the apostle had laid hold of Christ for the same purpose for which Christ had laid hold of him. Such a unity of purpose between the divine and human makes success a certainty. A father and his two-year-old boy were walking along the street, and when they came to a crossing the father reached down his hand and the boy reached up his for the same purpose—to assure safety for the inexperienced lad. About half way across the street the lad said, "See, Daddy, I have my eyes shut." On being told that what he was doing was dangerous, he replied, "No, Daddy, not while you hold my hand." How can we fail when we lay hold of our mighty Helper for the same purpose He lays hold of us?

Also, Paul's effort to attain godliness was characterized

by singleness of purpose. He said, "This one thing I do." His interests were not divided. He made the attainment of his goal the all-absorbing and dominating business of his life, giving it priority over everything else. "Forgetting those things which are behind," does not refer to the pleasant and profitable things of life that ought to be remembered, but to those experiences that hurt and wound and grieve. Are you able to forget these things? Have you made the attempt? Or have you a brilliant memory and a miserably poor forgetter in regard to things that ought to be forgotten and remembered no more forever? What wonderful memories some people have as far as their own and others' mistakes are concerned.

And there is plenty to forget in the lives of all who have spent many years in this world of sin and sorrow. Remorse and roots of bitterness could easily have ruined Paul's life. But he said that love does not "brood over wrongs." (1 Cor. 13:5, Weymouth.) In most lives there is a multitude of things to brood over unless the secret of forgetting has been learned. Before becoming a Christian, Paul had persecuted the saints and had even put some of them to death. And when he became a follower of Him whom he had once hated, the brethren were suspicious of his motives and made it difficult for him to enter into their fellowship.

The following counsel is greatly needed: "If we do represent Christ, we shall make His service appear attractive, as it really is. Christians who gather up gloom and sadness to their souls, and murmur and complain, are giving to others a false representation of God and the Christian life. They give the impression that God is not pleased to have His children happy, and in this they bear

false witness against our heavenly Father. . . . Satan ever seeks to make the religious life one of gloom. He desires it to appear toilsome and difficult; and when the Christian presents in his own life this view of religion, he is, through his unbelief, seconding the falsehood of Satan. Many, walking along the path of life, dwell upon their mistakes and failures and disappointments, and their hearts are filled with grief and discouragement. . . . It is not wise to gather together all the unpleasant recollections of a past life,—its iniquities and disappointments,—to talk over them and mourn over them until we are overwhelmed with discouragement. A discouraged soul is filled with darkness, shutting out the light of God from his own soul, and casting a shadow upon the pathway of others.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 120-122.

The noted philosopher Immanuel Kant never married. For years he trusted all of his household affairs to his manservant, Lampe. Then he discovered that for years he had been systematically robbed, and dismissed his servant. But he hardly knew how to live without him. In his journal appears this sentence: “Remember to forget Lampe.” All of us need to remember to forget those who have wronged us as well as the unpleasant experiences of life. We need also to remember that the past is gone forever and cannot be changed, recalled, or lived over again. “The past cannot be changed: the future is still in your power,” declared Hugh White. Longfellow gave wise counsel when he said: “Look not mournfully into the Past, it comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart.”

When the sins of the past are pardoned and restitu-

tion made where it is due, it is our privilege to forget what is no longer held against us in the heavenly records. The divine promise is, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. This leaves nothing to worry about as far as the past is concerned. The instruction is then given: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” 1 John 2:1, 2. This does not indicate a license to sin, but a provision in case we do. Lifeboats and life belts on board a ship do not indicate a plan for a shipwreck but are a provision in case of an accident. When forgiven, the past is taken care of as completely as if we had never sinned, and the joy of this experience becomes a reality through justification, or the imputed righteousness of Christ.

The second great secret is a refusal to worry over the future. Jesus said, “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day.” Matt. 6:34, R.S.V. “Do not be anxious,” is equivalent to saying, “Do not worry.” Why? Because “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (A.V.), or because “to-morrow will bring its own cares” (Weymouth), and “each day brings troubles enough for itself” (Twentieth Century New Testament). There are plenty of troubles and problems each day to keep us busy without borrowing from either the past or the future.

Worry is the giant joy killer of mankind, affecting the mind and body and spiritual life. A large percentage of

diseases have their source here. Jesus reproved Martha for being "anxious and worried about a multitude of things," (Weymouth), and the same reproof applies to millions, including many professed Christians. Much of man's worry and concern is over the future and its anticipated events. Jesus declared that there would be "distress of nations, with perplexity," and that men's hearts would faint and fail "for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21:25, 26.) This fear of the future has been greatly increased as the result of the harnessing of atomic energy and its use as a weapon of war. The haunting fear of a future atomic war has filled men with panic, especially the scientists who know the possibilities of such a catastrophe.

We must ever remember that tomorrow never arrives. We can never catch up with it, regardless of how long we live. How foolish, then, to borrow its anticipated troubles, most of which never happen! A recent study shows that 40 per cent of the future troubles that people expect and worry about never materialize, and that another 30 per cent are things we can do absolutely nothing about if they do come. Only 8 per cent can be solved by man, but not by worry.

Note the following quotation: "Each day has its burdens, its cares and perplexities; and when we meet, how ready we are to talk of our difficulties and trials. So many borrowed troubles intrude, so many fears are indulged, such a weight of anxiety is expressed, that one might suppose we had no pitying, loving Saviour, ready to hear all our requests, and to be to us a present help in every time of need. Some are always fearing, and borrowing trouble. Every day they are surrounded with

the tokens of God's love; every day they are enjoying the bounties of His providence; but they overlook these present blessings. Their minds are continually dwelling upon something disagreeable, which they fear may come." —*Ibid.*, pp. 126, 127.

There are many out-of-date troubles that long ago served any purpose they may have had, and therefore should be forgotten. Christians should never be antique trouble collectors, nor should they borrow from the future. "It is a misfortune to borrow the trouble of next week to embitter the present week. When real trouble comes, God will fit every meek and lowly one to bear it. When His providence permits it to come, He will provide help to endure it. Fretting and murmuring cloud and stain the soul, and shut out the bright sunlight from the pathway of others."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 641.

We are in no wise responsible for the trials and difficulties of life before they arrive. "Never trouble Trouble till Trouble troubles you," is good counsel. Calvin Coolidge said: "If I see ten troubles coming down the road I just stand firmly, for I know that nine of them will disappear before they reach me." There are only three places to borrow troubles, in one's own past, or future, or from others, who usually have plenty to lend. It is much easier to borrow troubles than to borrow money. But how foolish it is, because then we must meet our troubles three times instead of once. The first is in anticipation, the second in reality, and the third in memory. How some people must love them! Dealing with them once is really enough and is all God expects of His people. Even then full provision has been made to deal with them triumphantly.

The third secret of happiness is to live in the present

only. We pray for the Lord to "give us this day our daily bread," and pardon, and leadership, and deliverance, because today is the only day that really belongs to us and for which we are responsible. The past is gone forever, and tomorrow never comes; but today is my day and your day, and we have no other. "We are not to be anxious as to what we will do for weeks or months or years ahead; for the future does not belong to us. One day alone is ours, and during this day we are to live for God, beautify our characters by faith in the righteousness of Christ. This one day we are to place in the hands of Christ in solemn service, in all our purposes and plans to be guided by Him. This one day we are to do unto others exactly as we wish them to do unto us."—ELLEN G. WHITE in *Signs of the Times*, July 11, 1892.

Similar instruction is given in *Messages to Young People*, page 46: "Do not become overwhelmed with the great amount of work you must do in your lifetime, for you are not required to do it all at once. Let every power of your being go to each day's work, improve each precious opportunity, appreciate the help that God gives you, and make advancement up the ladder of progress step by step. Remember that you are to live but one day at a time, that God has given you one day, and heavenly records will show how you have valued its privileges and opportunities." Someone has very wisely said that we should so live each day that "our yesterdays will be a happy memory and our tomorrows will be fraught with eager anticipation."

Shortly before his death in 1939, Eugene Cone, student of the College of Medical Evangelists, wrote the following poem:

"The clock of life is wound but once;
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop
At late or early hour.

"Now is the only time you own;
Live, love, work with a will,
Place no faith in tomorrow, for
The clock may then be still."

In an address delivered to Yale students on April 20, 1913, Sir William Osler said: "The load of to-morrow, added to that of yesterday, carried to-day makes the strongest falter. Shut off the future as tightly as the past. . . . To youth, we are told, belongs the future, but the wretched to-morrow that so plagues some of us has no certainty, except through to-day. Who can tell what a day may bring forth? . . . The future is to-day—there is no to-morrow! The day of a man's salvation is *now*—the life of the present, of to-day, lived earnestly, intently, without a forward-looking thought, is the only insurance for the future. Let the limit of your horizon be a twenty-four hour circle."—*A Way of Life* (1932), pp. 27, 28. Osler declared that we ought to learn to live in "day-tight compartments." Newton said, "Be patient enough to live a day at a time, as Jesus taught us, letting yesterday go and leaving tomorrow until it arrives."

Man has subdivided the day into hours and minutes and seconds. This division makes it still easier to live in the present only. The secret of happiness is to live an hour, a minute, a second at a time. We are responsible only for the present moment. The story is told that John Huss was visited by a priest three days before he was to be

burned at the stake and offered freedom if he would deny his faith. He answered that he would not deny his Lord today for what was to happen day after tomorrow. The next day the offer was renewed, and he again refused on the basis that he served God a day at a time. The third morning the offer was made for the last time. The priest stated that this was the day for the terrible ordeal and urged Huss to recant. He answered that he served his Lord an hour at a time and would not deny Him because of what was to happen in the afternoon. He told a friend that if he remained faithful even unto death, he would give him a signal. As the fire enveloped his body his hand was seen waving in the flames, signaling the message that God's grace still sustains.

With the past taken care of through justification, and with the knowledge that we are not held responsible for even one minute or hour in the future because it does not belong to us, it is our privilege to live a moment, minute, or hour at a time through the keeping power of imparted righteousness. This is righteousness by faith and the secret of a happy Christian life. With this experience there can be no remorse or worry over the past or haunting fear of what may come in the future. The time of trouble during the seven last plagues has no terrors for such a Christian. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1. With a "conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men," the child of God enjoys "quietness and assurance" continually and abides in a "peaceable habitation" and in "quiet resting places." He lives in the atmosphere of heaven and knows the peace that passeth understanding.

This experience is beautifully described in the following statement: "By the life we live through the grace of Christ, the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth. The faces of men and women who walk and work with God, express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 312. To the appeal, "Now is the time to go to heaven," a Christian replied, "That is where I am living now."

If This Were My Last Day

11 If this were my last day, how would I spend it? is a very important question, because it may be my last day. It is the last day for thousands of men and women and children, and most of them do not know it. Some will die suddenly and unexpectedly on the battlefield, and others in accidents on land and sea. We live in a very dangerous world, where nobody is safe any where or any time. Life was never so uncertain as it is in this machine age, when travel seems to be the order of the day. Many are "running to and fro" as the result of the great increase of knowledge, which has produced our modern traveling conveniences.

Beginning with Pearl Harbor, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps of the United States lost 393,131 men killed during the last world war, but war is dangerous, and casualties are expected. Every youth who enters the service questions whether or not he will return home. But during the same period 355,000 Americans were killed and

millions injured by accidents in airplanes, railroad trains, automobiles, and by other means. As strange as it may seem, the home is one of the most dangerous places on earth as far as accidents are concerned. Death is striking everywhere without a moment's warning. None of us are sure of another day, hour, or minute. As far as insuring people against death is concerned, life insurance policies are misnomers.

But regardless of the uncertainty of life, many act as if they were insured against accident and death. Like the rich man in the parable, they imagine that they have many years to take their "ease" and "eat, drink, and be merry," when probation may close for them "this night." Roger Williams declared that the great certainty is death which is surrounded by three uncertainties—"the time *when*, the place *where*, and the manner *how*." He urged his hearers to remember that God has given us but two things that may be redeemed to His service—our time and our possessions. We must properly use our time, because we have no way of knowing how much is at our disposal. It is therefore helpful to meditate upon the fact of death and to "daily think that each day is our last."

Thousands of individuals seem to live by the fatalistic philosophy: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Young people sometimes excuse their conduct by saying, "I am only young once," or "I have but one life to live." These are the very best reasons why we should live carefully. If life's steps could be retraced, it would be different. There is no round-trip ticket on the road of life. Life is a one-way highway, and we travel over it but once. Nothing we do can be undone, and nothing we say can be unsaid. The poet Will Carlton expressed it thus:

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;
You can't do that when you're flying words.

"Thoughts unexpressed sometimes fall back dead,
But God himself can't kill them when they're said."

If I knew that this were my last day, how would I spend it? How would you spend your last day? Would you carry out your present plans and schedule, or would they have to be radically changed? John Wesley was approached by a woman who asked him how he would spend the day if he knew it were his last. She expected him to say that he would go into seclusion and spend the day in meditation, prayer, and fasting. He surprised her with the answer, "Just as I intend to spend it." That should be the language of every Christian. The story is told that Francis of Assisi was hoeing in his garden one day when a passer-by asked him what he would do if he suddenly learned that at sunset he would die. He answered, "I would finish hoeing my garden."

Daniel did not alter his daily program when he learned that death was imminent because of the decree signed by the king, that the person who worshiped any god except the king for thirty days would be thrown alive into the den of lions. As the apostle Paul faced death at the hands of Nero he was able to say, "I am now ready to be offered." In fact, he could have said this at any time after he met Jesus at the gate of Damascus. Years ago when Bishop Taylor of the Methodist Church returned from Africa, where he had for years been a successful missionary, he visited a number of Methodist camp meetings, where his mission experiences gripped the hearts of

his hearers, and all were impressed that he was a man of God. One night some men slipped up to his tent with the hope that they could hear him pray before retiring for the night. They waited a long time while he read the Bible. Finally he closed the Book and got down on his knees and said, "O Lord, I am so glad that we are still on the same good terms, good night."

Long and agonizing prayers are not necessary for those who live each day as though it were their last. This is the way Jesus asked His followers to live. He said: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:42-44.

It is the privilege of a Christian to be ready through justification all the time he is getting ready through sanctification, or Christian growth. Death is just as truly the close of probation to the individual as when Christ finishes His ministry as priest and mediator and stands up to reign as king. Death is the end of the world to the millions who die year by year. The person who lives each day as if it were his last is ready at all times. The psalmist said, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Ps. 118:24. In fact, today is the only day we have and for which we can be held responsible.

It is for this reason that the counsel is given, "*To day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." God's message to all men is, "I call heaven and earth to record *this day* against you, that I have set before you life and

death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deut. 30:19. We are asked to pray that God will "give us *this day*" our temporal and spiritual food, our daily pardon, leadership, and deliverance. It would be profitable for every Christian to make the resolution of Jonathan Edwards. "I have resolved," he said, "never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life." This principle of life would ensure continual preparedness.

This way of life is not contradicted by Christ's statement, "Occupy till I come." We are not denying our faith by building solidly for the future. Permanency has been a characteristic of God's work in all ages. We do not necessarily show a lack of faith in the doctrine of the soon coming of Christ by erecting buildings for religious purposes that are well constructed and attractive. In fact they give character to the everlasting gospel. Wise counsel is given in the statement, "Work as though you would live forever; live as though you would die today."

If I knew that today were my last day, how would I spend it? What would I do, and what would I refrain from doing? Since it may be my last day, it is the way I should spend every day. In the first place, I would make sure that I was in possession of my title to heaven through justification and that the past was taken care of as completely as if I had never sinned. There would be no unconfessed sins recorded in the books of heaven. I would claim the promise of constant cleansing, even of the sins of ignorance and omission, given in 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Thus the conscience would

continually be "void of offence toward God, and toward men." Restitution would be made where it was due.

I would also make sure that all was right between me and my fellow men. I should endeavor to follow the advice of Paul in Romans 12:17, 18: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"; or, "If you can, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with all the world." (Weymouth.) The language indicates that even when the Christian goes the second mile it may not be possible to live at peace with some individuals, but the fault should not be his. All wrongs should be made right, and roots of bitterness eliminated. There should be no unpaid debts. The Scriptural injunction is to "owe no man any thing." Even though a Christian has financial obligations, he should be sure that his creditors are satisfied. In this respect the golden rule should be strictly obeyed. As far as possible God's people should avoid the so-called easy payments, which are never easy, and live on a cash basis, so as to be ready if today should be the end of probation.

If my last day were the Sabbath, I should certainly obey the instruction given in Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold firmly to an unflinching avowal of our hope, for He is faithful who gave us the promises. And let us bestow thought on one another with a view to arousing one another to brotherly love and right conduct; not neglecting—as some habitually do—to meet together, but encouraging one another, and doing this all the more since you can see the day of Christ approaching." (Weymouth.) I would do my part in making the Sabbath a "holy convocation," or "calling together," and would

endeavor to be on time in attending divine services and in meeting my appointments with God. Why so many professed Christians can so punctually meet their appointments for labor and business and pleasure, even at an early hour, all through the week, and then be habitually late for religious services is one of the puzzling questions confronting every pastor.

I would certainly not insist on having the back seat in the house of God or be so impolite as to refuse to budge from the end seat so that others must always experience the difficult task of crowding by in order to enjoy the service. I would also do all within my power to enter into the spirit of worship by being quiet and reverent in God's holy sanctuary. If I knew it were my last day, I would attempt to get every possible blessing out of the Sabbath school and church service, regardless of who the teacher or preacher might be. "When you are growing in grace, you will love to attend religious meetings," is a statement found in *Messages to Young People*, page 122. Such a person would guard the edges of the Sabbath and endeavor to keep the entire day holy, making it a holy day rather than a holiday.

Of course time would be given for the reading and study of the Scriptures, and if possible, other religious literature that would nourish the soul. There would be no time for cheap and trashy literature, which would contribute to the worldly mold and clutter up the mind, since it is made up of what is put into it. There would be no time for the comics and the type of modern music that is evidence of irrational mentality. The theater, which has been called the devil's playhouse and the greatest school of crime, would claim none of my time. The radio and

television would be used with great discretion. If I owned the latter, I would try never to forget that by beholding we are changed into the character of that which we look at and adore.

Prayer would also play an important role in my last day. I would endeavor to "pray without ceasing," by living in the atmosphere of prayer, and make it as necessary to spiritual life as is breathing to my physical welfare. Prayer appointments with God would be met with regularity, and no secular duties would be permitted to crowd them out. To pray without ceasing does not mean to be continually on one's knees, but rather never to permit one's prayer habits to cease. Of Enoch we read: "To him prayer was as the breath of the soul. He lived in the atmosphere of heaven. . . . Enoch's heart was upon his eternal treasures. He had looked upon the celestial city. He had seen the King in His glory in the midst of Zion. The greater the existing iniquity, the more earnest was his longing for the home of God. While still on earth, he dwelt, by faith, in the realms of light."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 330, 331. The statement is added, "To such communion God is calling us."

Living by this day-by-day principle, I would cultivate a love for spiritual and heavenly things, and thus obey the instruction given in Colossians 3:1-3: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." I would shun all worldly pleasures and amusements that would tend to lead me in the wrong direction and make it impossible for me to set my face like a flint Zionward. I

would want to be sure that both my conversation and citizenship were in heaven. There would be no idle words, unjust criticism, unbecoming jesting, or suggestive stories.

If engaged in secular labor, I would be diligent and faithful. There would be no loafing or shirking on the job. I would not render eye service, being diligent only while under observation, but would serve as unto the Lord. I would give value in service equivalent to the wages paid. It is not so much a question as to where we are as to what we are when probation closes. If ready, the person working on the farm is as safe as the minister in the pulpit. Jesus declared that when probation closes two persons would be working in the field or grinding at the mill, and that one would be saved and the other lost. Character is the determining factor in salvation.

On my last day I would want to do something to help others to obtain the more abundant life. The most important of all types of missionary service is the example of a godly life. That is more effective than all literature and visits and sermons combined. There are of course many other ways by which we can share our faith and thus fulfill the gospel commission. The church can accomplish her divinely appointed mission of proclaiming the gospel to every creature only as each individual member acts his part in lighting the earth with the glory of the everlasting gospel for these last days.

And last but not least, if I knew that this day were my last, I would be sure that I was in possession of the experiences recorded in Romans 5:1 and 8:1-4, having "peace with God" through imputed righteousness and being free from guilt or condemnation as far as the sins of the past are concerned. And then, abiding in Christ

and knowing that He dwells in me through the Holy Spirit, I would enjoy His imparted righteousness, and thus be ready all the time I am being fitted for heaven through character development. I would therefore be able to say as confidently as did the apostle Paul that "he who has begun a good work" in me is abundantly able to finish or "perfect it in preparation for the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6, Weymouth.) In the light of what God has made available to me, how could I help but be a radiant Christian?

If This Were My Last Sermon

12

The topic, "If This Were My Last Sermon," was suggested to a group of pastors by a high church official, with the recommendation that they all discuss it on a certain

Sunday morning. I do not know what these preachers said from their pulpits, but the suggestion resulted in a train of thought, and from these meditations a sermon was born, which has proved a blessing to thousands of people.

This is of course a difficult assignment because of the fact that each of the thousands of sermons preached have seemed important. In selecting only one topic I would naturally have to omit many matters of interest in order to speak on a few topics of paramount importance. Many subjects that are timely would have to be omitted in order to place the emphasis on a few subjects that are timeless.

And after all, any sermon may be my last. No minister has any assurance that he will ever again stand in the sacred desk as the spokesman for God. Pastors have fallen dead just before or during or after entering their pulpits.

Death is no respecter of persons or places, and does not hesitate to enter even the holy of holies and strike down the anointed of Heaven. And if the sermon is not the last preached by the pastor, it may be the last that some member of his congregation will ever hear, and that too makes it vitally important. Every minister has preached the last sermon that hundreds ever heard, and this solemn fact should give him a sense of fearful responsibility.

But if I knew that a certain sermon would be the last I would ever proclaim to my congregation, I would endeavor to preach in condensed form the very core of the gospel, the truths without which a person cannot live the more abundant life, and without which he dare not die and face eternity. I would follow the policy of Richard Baxter, known as the Whitfield of the seventeenth century, who said of each of his sermons, "I preached as never sure to preach again; as dying man to dying men."

On Sunday night, October 8, 1871, Dwight L. Moody preached to a large audience in his Chicago Tabernacle on "What Shall I Do With Jesus Which Is Called the Christ?" The message made a profound impression. At the close the speaker said, "I wish you would all think about this question for a week and come back next Sunday and make your decision." Sankey, the musician, felt that Moody made a great mistake by asking those present to make their decision a week later rather than at that time, so he arose at once and began to sing:

"To-day the Saviour calls,
For refuge fly;
The storm of vengeance falls;
And death is nigh."

The hymn was never finished. It was suddenly interrupted by the clanging of bells, the blasts of whistles, and the noise and roar of fire engines. The great Chicago fire had begun, and the tabernacle was one of the thousands of buildings reduced to ashes. The appointed decision time never came, and the same audience never came together again. It was the last sermon many ever heard, and Moody regretted the mistake to his dying day and saw to it that the blunder was never repeated.

If I knew a particular sermon were to be my last, I would probably choose as the text John 3:16, the most familiar and well known in the Bible and the first to be translated into a new language. It has been appropriately called the little Gospel and the little Bible. It is indeed the gospel in miniature, the whole of the Scriptures in embryo, the plan of redemption wrapped up in a single verse.

A noted British preacher said of this text: "This is the kind of text which terrifies a preacher. It is so familiar that one despairs of saying anything fresh and new. It is so great that one can say nothing worthy. It is so comprehensive that one can say nothing adequate." And yet he declared that during the forty-three years of his ministry he had preached nothing else. It would be well if the same could be said of every minister, that every sermon is but an unfolding of some phase of the unfathomable love of God, whose height and depth and breadth cannot be measured except by the cross of Calvary.

Even the most profound student should be kept very humble by the exhaustless nature of the Scriptural mine of truth. This is beautifully stated in the following quotation: "It is impossible for any human mind to exhaust even one truth or promise of the Bible. One catches the

glory from one point of view, another from another point; yet we can discern only gleamings. The full radiance is beyond our vision. As we contemplate the great things of God's word, we look into a fountain that broadens and deepens beneath our gaze. Its breadth and depth pass our knowledge. As we gaze, the vision widens; stretched out before us we behold a boundless, shoreless sea. Such study has vivifying power. The mind and heart acquire new strength, new life."—*Education*, p. 171.

In the light of this statement and scores more like it, how can anyone say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," or other statements indicating that he knows all that needs to be known of Bible truth, forgetting that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Since God's Word is the source of spiritual light to those who continually search the Scriptures as for hidden treasure, the journey to the celestial city will be over an illuminated pathway, because it is the highway of holiness.

Let us take our text into the laboratory of Scriptural research and briefly analyze its contents. First of all, it sets forth the fact and reality of God's love, which is the central theme of the Scriptures. The Bible is indeed and in truth God's love letter to man. On every page of divine revelation is the message to mankind, "I love you." All Scripture proclaims that "God is love." It is the very essence of His character, the foundation of His government, the basic principle motivating all of His words and acts. The great deceiver has made a supreme effort to conceal the fact of God's love, and in this he has been amazingly successful. He has placed God in a false light by over-

emphasizing His stern justice and minimizing His love and mercy. This has been very evident among the heathen, and Roman Catholics approach the Father through a whole galaxy of human mediators and intercessors in order to appease His wrath. Christendom as a whole is permeated with the same idea of the character of God. It is evident from the Scriptures that all three members of the Godhead love man with an equal devotion and have doubtless made an equal contribution in sacrifice in order to make effective the plan of redemption, and will therefore share equally in the praise and honor and glory given by the redeemed and unfallen beings throughout all eternity.

Our text also sets forth the object of God's love. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Not the world in its original and sinless state of beauty and perfection, but the world under the curse of sin; the world of men with all their vileness, waywardness, blindness, iniquity, and rebellion, deserving nothing but destruction. Martin Luther said, "If I were as our Lord God, . . . and these vile people were as disobedient as they now be, I would knock the world to pieces."

We would doubtless all do the same if we could see and know all that God sees and knows of conditions in it. We could not possibly put up with the human race even for one year. How fortunate we all are that a patient and merciful and long-suffering God of love is in control and is dealing with the rebel human family instead of impatient man. We being what we are, and God being what He is in purity and holiness, His love and kindness are amazing. Because He loves righteousness and hates iniquity, what prevents Him from shrinking back with loathing, and letting the world and its inhabitants go to their deserved

doom? What keeps Him from blasting the world into annihilation? What is there here to attract or deserve His love? I must confess that I cannot understand such love. It passes all knowledge.

The Pharisees believed that God loved only His chosen people, the Hebrew race, and hated all others; that "the world" meant the Gentiles who would all be destroyed at the coming of the Messiah. Christ's statement must have shocked Nicodemus to whom it was spoken. Jesus does not belong to any one race or segment of society. Through His veins coursed the blood of all nations. Among His ancestors were Rahab and Ruth and many other Gentiles. He is declared to be "the Saviour of the world." John 4:42. John said that He died, not for our sins only, but "also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2. Peter wrote that God is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9.

The prophet Isaiah in describing the closing work of the gospel said that "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isaiah 52:10. Christ is declared to be "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," which embraces the whole human race. All receive light enough to save or condemn them on the basis of their attitude toward it. In the chapter in *Prophecy and Kings* entitled "Hope for the Heathen," is the statement that "Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world."—Page 377. Salvation is not restricted to any race or number of individuals in any generation. It is always "whosoever will."

The Lord rebuked Elijah for his narrow vision when he complained, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my

life." The Lord shocked and surprised him with the statement: "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal." Commenting on this experience, the messenger of the Lord wrote: "What strange work Elijah would have done in numbering Israel at the time when God's judgments were falling upon the backsliding people! He could count only one on the Lord's side."—*Ibid.*, p. 189. Then follows a timely warning to those in modern Israel whose narrow vision limits the power of God as to the number who will be saved out of the last generation: "Then let no man attempt to number Israel to-day, but let every one have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ, reaches out for the salvation of a lost world."—*Ibid.* If the whole human race would turn to God and accept the plan of redemption, heaven would rejoice and room would be provided for them in the kingdom of glory.

Our text also describes the measure or extent of God's love. He not only loved, but He "*so* loved . . . , that he gave his only begotten Son" to pay the price of redemption. He loved the world collectively and individually—all and each one in particular without exception or distinction of race, or creed, or color. Each Christian can say with Paul, "The Son of God . . . loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." Christ would have died for *me* if I had been the only sinner in the world. "God *so* loved . . . , that he *gave*." Love is always measured by giving. In fact, it can be demonstrated in no other way. Giving is a delight to those who love, and to them there is no burden or sacrifice.

What was the gift of God? It was not the mighty

angel Gabriel, although he offered to die in Christ's stead. But no created being could pay the redemption price, for only the Creator can re-create, and only the Law-giver can redeem from the curse and condemnation of the law. God did not give one of His sons, for He had but one. Like Abraham, He offered in sacrifice "his only begotten Son," the One in whom His affections centered. It was a love that baffles all human reasoning and reaches far beyond our mental horizons.

William Gladstone wrote of God's gift to man: "If asked the remedy for the heart's deepest sorrows, I must point to the old, old story, told in the old, old Book, and taught with an old, old teaching, which is the greatest and best gift ever given to mankind." God's love is so great that it cannot be comprehended. We can only point to its greatest manifestation on the cross of Calvary and say with John, the apostle of love, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3:1.

John 3:16 also sets forth the intent or purpose of God's love: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The purpose of His love is stated in both the negative and the positive. First, that we "should not perish," and then that we might "have everlasting life"—that we might escape hell and gain heaven, the two opposite destinations of all men. This is again stated in verse 17: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." God's love is never inconsistent with His justice or His hatred of, and wrath against, sin. As free moral agents with the power of choice, we make the decisions that determine our eternal destinies.

Our text also reveals our part in the plan of redemption in the statement: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Our part is to believe, to exercise faith, without which "it is impossible to please him." God could have made man's part very difficult, as many religions do, by placing righteousness and salvation on the basis of human works and credit. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6:28, 29. Paul quoted the Scriptures as saying, "'And Abraham believed God, and this was placed to his credit as righteousness.'" Rom. 4:3, Weymouth. He also said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9.

"Whosoever" includes us all, and makes it impossible for any human being to be excluded from the provisions of God's redeeming love. Richard Baxter said, "Thank God for that 'whosoever.' If it had read 'Richard Baxter,' I might have thought that it meant some other Richard Baxter, but that 'whosoever' includes me, even though I be the worst of all Richard Baxters that ever lived."

But love always demands and produces a reciprocation of love. "We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19. Love begets love in return. When we hear that another loves us, we immediately begin to love him in return. We are told that "he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." Verse 8. In other words, if we know God, we can't help loving Him. Lack of love is so often due to a lack of knowledge and acquaintance, on which all true love is based. There can be no such thing

as love at first sight. There may be admiration and sometimes infatuation, the counterfeit of love, but genuine love is impossible without acquaintance, which requires time and association. For this reason most of the quick marriages go on the rocks.

Jesus enunciated the most basic and fundamental principle of Christianity when He said that the first and greatest of all the duties of man was to love God with all the affections of the heart, the reasoning of the intellect, the devotions of the spirit, and the strength of the body, and that this would make it possible to love his fellow men on an equality with himself. Thus "love is the fulfilling of the law." Paul declared that love "satisfied the demands of Law," and "is therefore complete obedience to Law." Rom. 13:8, 10, Weymouth. In fact, to obey God on the motivating principle of love, reverence, and godly fear is "the whole duty of man."

The great need of the modern church is a revival of the love that animated the early Christians. This will come only as the result of a greater comprehension of the indescribable love of God. May that vision come soon so that Pentecost can be repeated in the refreshing showers of the latter rain and the church again become "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."